Sofyan Rajab 1927

GERALDWOOD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

VILLEROY, AND SIGISMAR.

VOL. I.

"I left no calling for this idle trade,
"No duty broke.——" POPE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR R. DUTTON, NO. 10, BIRCHIN-LANE, CORNHILL,

By J. D. Dewick, Aldersgate-street.

1801.

INTRODUCTION.

"I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke——"

THIS has before been my motto, and is still my excuse for writing a novel. To myself, it has been satisfactory; to the world, I hope it will prove equally so, since, in truth, I have none better to offer, unless much leisure, an active and diligent mind, destitute of abilities to do any thing more praise-worthy, may be admitted as such. After having dedicated several hours of each day to useful reading, I apply to my pen as recreation.

Be not alarmed, my fair country-woman;—do not throw away poor Geraldwood;—she, no more than her parent, can talk either gravely or wisely. But, lest what I have inadvertently said, of hours dedicated to useful reading, should operate to the prejudice of my respectable and liberal-minded publisher, by lead-

ing you to suppose, that my book is a treatise on ethics, instead of a love-story. I hasten to inform you, that I am not a Solomon, but a light, airy nothing, exceedingly resembling yourselves; for instance, I laugh a great deal—talk much—and think very little;—I wear high feathers—go to routes, and have made considerable curtailments in my drapery. I doat on the opera, and am bent on learning to play the cymbals.

Now, are you satisfied?—Yes, I see you are convinced, that nothing is to be dreaded from such an author. No lectures on bare necks—no recommendation of warm petticoats, œconomy, housewifery, or religion. Delighted, you exclaim, "Yes, yes, she is one of us—she must write sweetly;" then, peeping at the title-page, you observe, "By the Author of Villeroy, and Sigismar," and your ecstacies are increased. "Oh," you continue, "I hope this will resemble those *dear* books—I remember them well:—one heroine broke her heart, and the other went mad, while all the heroes committed suicide, to preserve them from dying for love."

Thank

Thank you, my fair friends.—I scarcely know whether this perfect recollection reflects most honour on yourselves or me. Be that as it may, I repeat my thanks, and candidly confess, that the encouragement given to these my former productions, has induced me once more to solicit your unqualified approbation. Let your applause be speedy and loud; bear in your minds, "She stays too long, who waits till all commend." Suffer me, this once, to set the fashion, and I vow to follow your's ever after; at the same time, be warned—had either Villeroy or Sigismar failed, the world would no more have heard from their author.

To minds like your's, a hint is sufficient; I shall not be more explicit, yet, I will just observe—on the fate of Geraldwood depends that of a most uncommon and surprizing story, at present, locked up in my brain; or, if that pleases the critics better, in my head; in which I shall positively introduce one ghost, but whether to make it the hero or the heroine of the piece, I have not yet determined; all I promise, is, that it shall be an original—none of your second-hand

hand gentry—you may rely upon it, that I will never adorn my page with a borrowed spirit.

But while I am telling you what I mean to do, I detain you from perusing what I have already done; I therefore take my leave, earnestly wishing you may derive as much amusement from the reading Geraldwood, as I have from the writing; then will you have "your content so absolute," you will say,

> "That not another novel like to this,
> Succeeds—or went before."

GERALDWOOD.

CHAP. I.

THE Earl of Belmont had returned to his house in Portland-Place somewhat earlier than was his custom, when, having given his commands that his son and daughter, Lord and Lady Jane Felix, should attend him at breakfast the following morning, he hurried to his apartment, apparently much disturbed.

At the hour appointed, they repaired to the breakfast-room, and were, after some time, joined by the Earl, whose manner was constrained, and whose looks wore an air of chagrin and humility.

They took their chocolate in silence; during which the Earl seemed labouring with some communication which he had not resolution to utter, while Lord Felix and his sister sat in wondering expectation of what was to follow.

Roused at length by the attention in which they were fixed, and assuming his usual air of authority, his Lordship desired they would be prepared to accompany him on a visit into Yorkshire, at that hour the next morning, and left the room.

Lady Jane looked at her brother, as if to learn from him the meaning of this most uncommon command, while the eyes of his Lordship seemed to require the same explanation from the door through which his father had made his hasty exit.

From this contemplation he was awakened by the voice of his sister, crying, "Dear Edward, do tell me what can this mean?"

To

To which, after a minute of deep reflection, he replied, "Upon my soul, sister, I cannot, but yonder is the steward, he shall solve the mystery: wait my return, and I will render you as wise as myself."

With this he vanished, but speedily returned, crying out, "More wonders, Jane; old factotum, either is, or pretends to be, equally ignorant of the motive of this visit, the part of Yorkshire, and the party to whom it is to be made. He is certain our father knows but one person in that county, and as certain it cannot be to him: in short, all his knowledge of the business amounts to this, that his Lord sets off to-morrow morning, leaves him behind, and takes us with him."

Lady Jane expressed her opinion by an emphatic "Most extraordinary!" in which her brother joined, as they both

did, on the folly of wondering at commands they dared neither inquire into, nor dispute.

They saw no more of the Earl, until they were summoned to join him in his travelling coach. The journey was gloomy enough. Lady Jane passed her time in tender regret for the society she had left; Lord Felix in endeavouring to anticipate that which he was to meet; while their father preserved the sullen dignity he was wont to put on, when in the company of his family only.

After some days travelling, they stopped at the gate of a showy-looking farmhouse, and were welcomed to Blue-Bell Manor by a short, squat, elderly man, arrayed in a scarlet waistcoat, trimmed with broad gold lace, and a full bottomed wig, most elaborately powdered. With many bows and protestations of "the perdigious honour the Earl did him," they

were escorted through a flower-garden to the house, at the door of which they were met by a jolly looking woman, who assured them, with a heartiness that did not belie her words, "that she was right glad to see them, and wastly obliged to them for coming to her poor place; thof, to be sure, it had cost a mint and all of money."

They were now ushered into a parlour, the floor of which was nicely covered with an oiled cloth, that for redness could only be equalled by the vermilioned bricks which composed the hearth. The mantle-piece had not been neglected, as the well-arranged and well-dusted punch-bowls attested. The chairs and tables would have served for mirrors, had not one been suspended over the fire-place, and which answered the double purpose of shewing folks their faces, and reflecting the beauty of the punch-bowls.

Here they were soon joined by a strong healthy-looking youth of twenty, sprucely dressed, and in the extreme of the fashion. He was presented to the company by the host, under the designation of "his son Joey." Joey appeared at first somewhat abashed; but, on a little encouragement from his father, seated himself next Lady Jane, and asked her "if she was not very hot?" To which she replied, with condescending sweetness, "the weather had indeed been very sultry."

He now put several other questions, equally elegant, which Mr. Twaddle, (the name of their entertainer) observing, gave the Earl a significant nod; then walking up to Lord Felix, told him to "be of good cheer, for he should have a sweetheart by and by."

Here the entrance of a rustic put an end to all further discourse, by telling them "to come to dinner."

No

No sooner had the word *dinner* been pronounced, than up jumped father, mother, and son, and calling to their guests to advance, led the way. They were all speedily seated at a table, heavily burthened with the good things of this world, the eagerness to enjoy which, had nearly prevented the introduction of their daughter, Miss Biddy Twaddle, a fine fat rosy girl of eighteen, whose good-humoured, wholesome countenance, tho' it might, by the fastidious, be accused of wanting the expression of discernment and sensibility, must by the judicious be acknowledged equally silent as to any unamiable or mischievous disposition.

Her naturally clear, clean, round face, it must be allowed, was at present somewhat heated, owing to the assistance she had, as was her custom, lent towards dishing the dinner; nor had her firm and well-

well-grown marbled arms escaped a toasting. She was seated beside Lord Felix; the young 'Squire having previously taken the chair next Lady Jane. A general silence ensued, if that might be termed silence, where the confusion was great, of plates rattling, knives falling, glasses ringing, with the uncouth step of the heavy shoed plough-boy, who, with a sturdy wench, composed the attendants at this "Feast of Reason," let me call it; for my readers will, if they have patience, learn, there was reason for this feast.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

DURING the cessation from conversation, all the parties were not alike actively employed; at least, their employment was different: for, from the moment Mr. Alderman Twaddle, for he was an alderman, had fastened the table-cloth under his chin, he looked not beyond his plate, save when it warned him it would shortly want replenishing. Then, indeed, his expressive eyes were rolled to observe what next would most agreeably supply its deficiences; while the hostess, more attentive to her guests, was perpetually heaping their plates, urging them to eat, and protesting she feared they did not like their

their dinner, which, to encourage them, she assured them was the very best of its kind; and to convince them of this, she proceeded to inform them of the price of most of the articles, which were "monstrous dear."

Lady Jane endeavoured to eat; Lord Felix did; but the Earl, in defiance of every effort to the contrary, appeared distrait and uneasy. With the viands, the Alderman's taciturnity vanished; he challenged the father to a "hobnob," and advised the young people to follow the example. This was soon succeeded by a second bumper, "To the better acquaintance of Lady Jane and his son." Of this there seemed no very early prospect, as her Ladyship, offended by the vulgar freedom of her neighbour, had withdrawn to the greatest possible distance the table would admit, where she sat wrapped in amazement at the scene before

before her; while her brother, who was always inclined to make the most of whatever amusement the present moment afforded, was employed in paying the most extravagant compliments to Miss Biddy Twaddle, who testified her approbation, or at least her good humour, by loud and repeated laughs.

Mrs. Twaddle proposing a walk in the garden, broke up the party, until a summons to supper again united them. The cloth removed, the Alderman indulged himself in as sound a nap, as the frequent interruptions of his wife, exclaiming, "My dear, I wonder you are not ashamed —I am sure his Lordship will think you don't know how to behave yourself," would allow; but finding this observation produced no other effect, than a sleepy reply of, "Beg pardon, my Lord—beg pardon;" she said, "It was no good to sit there to see him sleep, so they had better

go to bed, if it was agreeable to all parties." No objection was made, and each retired to the apartment prepared for them.

The breakfast on the following morning passed much as the preceding meals had done; indeed Lady Jane thought the society greatly improved, by the absence of the young 'Squire, for whom she had conceived an insurmountable aversion, and who was gone out on business. The same excuse soon deprived them of his father's company, and Mrs. Twaddle, after sending the young ladies to take a walk, retired, as she said, "to have a look after matters in the kitchen."

Lord Felix, ever in pursuit of amusement, and certain that his father's company would not afford him any, arose to follow his hostess, thinking she, or her pigs, of whose wonderful understandings he had heard a great deal, might answer

his purpose, but was prevented by the Earl's saying, "He wished to speak with him."

A silence of some moments ensued; during which, the confusion of his Lordship was too visible not to be noticed by his son, who requested to know "If any thing had made him uneasy?"

He replied, "He had not any uneasiness, but what it was in his power to dissipate; as five minutes attention to what he had to say, would convince him."

A second silence ensued; nor was Lord Felix now in a hurry to have his curiosity satisfied. His father spoke in an humble tone, a most unusual circumstance, and a positive proof, that what he had to propose, could not be ushered in the shape of a command, otherwise it had assuredly been so delivered, being the stile far the most congenial with his feelings and habits. What then could this

mighty

mighty business be? He had heard the steward drop some hints of certain bonds being payable, and no money to be had: this then was the secret—he wanted to curtail his allowance; (an allowance already far too small for the necessaries of life, for such he deemed the extravagancies) and to add the paltry pittance to his own immense expenditure.

From this meditation on the injustice of his father, he was awakened, by that father's requesting to know what he thought of Miss Twaddle?

The question was so unexpected, and so much more agreeable than the expected one of "How much he could spare to his parent's necessities," which he had prepared himself to answer, that he was at a loss what to reply, until the same question angrily repeated, reminded him he must say something; and not imagining it signified much, replied,

replied, "What do I think of Miss Twaddle, my Lord? I think she is a fine rosy wench."

"Sir," returned the Earl, "I do not choose to have my words repeated; nor do I expect a ridiculous answer, when I ask a serious question."

"If your Lordship's question was really serious, I am afraid you will expect a serious reply, and that I shall find it difficult to give, as I cannot even think of the person in question with any degree of gravity."

"Then I am to suppose she pleases you."

"Oh! most wonderfully."

"I am glad of it, as I wish you to be happy; and to speak plainly, Edward, I wish you to look upon Miss Twaddle, as the woman who will make you so."

"In what way, my Lord?"

"As your wife—as Lady Felix."

A burst

A burst of laughter from the son prevented the Earl's proceeding: he paced the room several times. At length, motioning to Lord Felix to be seated, he placed himself beside him, and with a voice almost inarticulate, said, "Will you refuse to save your father? Edward, I am undone: a life of extravagance and misconduct has plunged me into difficulties, from which you must save me, or sink with me; my estate, your estate, is gone; nor is this all, I am overwhelmed with debts; my honour is at stake, you must redeem it; with you it rests, to render your own future days affluent, and mine respectable; or your's penurious and mine disgraceful. This confession has been delayed to the latest moment; could death have preserved my secret, I would have embraced it, sooner than thus have humbled myself to you: but my follies have been baneful to others: the

the grave could not have concealed them. I repeat, it is in your power to restore me to peace, and yourself to affluence, by uniting yourself with Miss Twaddle's fortune, and joining me in persuading Lady Jane to do the same, by accepting the heir of this family as her husband."

Lord Felix, who had listened with the utmost attention, until the mention of his sister's name, now rising hastily from his seat, exclaimed, "Lady Jane Felix marry Joey Twaddle! 'Fore Gad, my Lord, you have joked it well. Upon my soul, I began to think you in earnest. Devil take me, my dear Sir, if ever I was so frightened in my whole life before; but, thank God, the last proposal bore the stamp of ridicule too plain to be mistaken for any thing else."

"Yet," said the Earl, in a solemn voice, "death is not more certain, than is the truth

truth of what I have told you, in its fullest extent."

The son looked earnestly in his father's face, as if still doubting, and inquired, "What! Jane, too?"

"Yes, both; but do not, Edward, add to my afflictions—I humble myself to entreat you will not; and remember, it is not my own interest alone I consult, it is your's, and your sister's—it is the only method to preserve you both from beggary, and myself from —— But no matter; will you comply?—The time is precious.—The father of these young people will shortly return, and with all that consequence which wealth gives, will expect our unqualified determination."

"And has your Lordship reflected on the probable evils a compliance with his and your schemes will involve you in? Do you forget the engagement entered into with the father of Lady Susan Trelawney,

lawney, to receive her as the future wife of your son?—Or, should this have escaped your memory, has it been equally treacherous in respect to the repeated promises you have made not to oppose the happiness of your daughter with the object of her long and faithful affection? Even if your memory has been so very convenient, I should doubt whether those gentlemen have been equally fortunate, and whether they may not call upon you to fulfil your engagements to them, in the manner you are least prepared to answer. For so much of those engagements as relate to myself, they were entered into without my concurrence—they will be settled without my assistance. Your Lordship took the trouble of finding me a wife—I most dutifully consented to accept her, and can, without any great stretch of generosity, resign her. Nay, I will go farther, as to beg or starve, is the

the alternative, I will devote myself to worship the golden calf, your paternal discernment has set before me. Thus far I promise to aid your preposterous arrangements, but beyond this, neither duty nor affection can urge me; for were your Lordship's ruin and infamy the certain consequence, and my voice could save you, by pleading with my sister, that voice should be against you. Nay, I would entreat her to leave you to perish, sooner than plunge herself into irretrievable destruction. That any difficulties, or any distress, could drive you for one moment to endure the thought of such an union, fills me with amazement." The Earl stood abashed, and his son left the room.

In a moment after, Lady Jane entered, and observing her father's altered looks, inquired if he was unwell. He led her to a seat, and throwing himself on his

knees

knees before her, drew from his pocket a pistol, at the same time declaring, it rested with her, whether he ever arose from that position. She must therefore prepare herself to comply with his request, or see him expire by his own hand. Almost breathless with terror, she exclaimed, "Speak! my Lord, speak instantly! I swear, by Heaven, to grant whatever you may require of me."

He embraced, and thanked her; then related, as he had before done to his son, the disasters which awaited him.

She attended eagerly, wishing to know how her interference could save him from them; but when her father concluded, by declaring it was by her marriage with the son of their host, she started from her seat, and unconscious what she intended, had reached the door, when a deep groan from her father arrested her flight. She looked fearfully round, and beheld him

him directing the pistol to his temple. Frantic with horror, she seized his uplifted arm, and sunk senseless at his feet. The Earl was too deeply skilled in the knowledge of his victim's heart, to lose the first moment of returning life, to compleat his purpose, by prevailing on her frightened imagination, and inducing her to bind herself by promises the most solemn to submit implicitly to his disposal. Having obtained all he wished, he desired her to retire and compose herself before she joined the family at dinner.

Almost fearful of leaving him, she was slowly moving towards the door, when the entrance of her brother prevented her preceeding. Shocked at her death-like appearance, he hastily inquired the cause; but before she could reply, the Earl told him to leave his sister to herself, she knew her duty and would perform it.

Lord

Lord Felix, though of a thoughtless and dissipated temper, loved his sister affectionately; and next to her, Mr. Fitzroy, to whom she was engaged, possessed his warmest regards. He had been as anxious, as any motive could induce him to be, for her union with him, and now felt determined to oppose it with any other. He had rightly conceived, that her father's proposals, and, probably, commands, had reduced her to her present situation; he therefore turned to him, demanding that explanation he seemed desirous to prevent his receiving from herself; but finding that he hesitated, he said, "I am happy, my Lord, to perceive you are ashamed to repeat the notable project you have formed, of repairing your fortune by attaching disgrace to your ancestry—ridicule to my character—and wretchedness to the bosom of your daughter. It is better you should

should blush for the deed undone, than execrate it done."

The Earl's eyes flashed fire; he would have spoke, but rage prevented him. Lady Jane observed his situation; and her terrors returned. She flew to secure the pistol; and holding it up, she exclaimed, in a tone of phrensy, "Beware, Edward, beware; I have preserved his life, do not you again drive him to desperation!"

Lord Felix started at sight of the pistol, but soon recovering from his surprize, he turned to his sister, requiring to know by what means she had preserved her father's life. "By performing her duty, in conforming to my wishes," replied the Earl.

After a look, in which a smile of contempt was but too visible, Edward congratulated his father on his *fine* acting—on his *honourable* acting—and on the knowledge

knowledge he had obtained of the tempers of his children, with the parental use he meant to make of that knowledge. He then presented him the pistol, adding, "As your Lordship has gained your point, even the timid Jane can have no fears at leaving this dreadful instrument with you."

He then led his afflicted sister to her own apartment, where he ridiculed alike her tears for her father, and the promise she had so foolishly made him, and left her.

CHAP. III.

LADY JANE by no means felt herself comforted: her ideas and her brother's were as widely different as had been their education, Lord Felix having been brought up by his grandfather, who was but lately dead, and who had indulged him in all his wishes, and had never been known to reprove him, unless it was for some trait of diffidence or economy. He had been taught to fear no man, not even his father; while his sister, until she was fifteen, had been the constant companion of a broken-hearted mother, who being deprived, by her tyrannical lord, of all happiness in this world, derived

rived her only comfort from the prospect of a better.

At the death of this truly amiable parent, she was consigned to the care of a father, whom, from her earliest infancy, she had been instructed to fear and to obey. Nor did his conduct serve to imprint any other sensations on her mind, as he was reserved in his manner, and stern in his aspect, when they met, nor ever failed to exact the most implicit obedience, even on trifling occasions. Thus the promise, which the levity of the brother's disposition treated with ridicule, appeared, to the fearful and gentle temper of his sister, big with calamity to herself, or her father. Indeed, to herself she might have confined the ruin, as she felt that she dared not dispute his will.

On the summons to dinner, she with truth pleaded illness as her excuse for not attending: she had the worst disorder,

the sickness of the heart. The time spent at table passed but heavily: with the cloth, the good-natured Biddy withdrew to attend Lady Jane, and her mother to the more agreeable occupation of seeing the poultry disposed of for the night.

Mr. Twaddle broke the silence which had prevailed, by asking the Earl how matters went on, and if the young folks were agreeable. The Earl, without any hesitation, said, Lord Felix and Lady Jane Felix knew their duty, and were ready to perform it. The Alderman, seizing Edward's hand, exclaimed, "That's well—that's as it should be—no shilly-shally—no fuss. By gosh, you're right, my lad—eighty thousand pounds, and a good snug farm into the bargain, ar'n't to be had every day; thof I didn't know, as you were a Lord, and a London spark, whether my Biddy would have had any charms

charms for you; but its all as it should be, so let's make an end on't, and get the parson to work. What say my two tight lads?"

Lord Felix replied, "For my part, Mr. Alderman, I say, your daughter's charms are of a weight and magnitude sufficient to subdue me; so much so, that were she less wise, less beautiful, and less accomplished than she is, I should find her irresistible."

"Well spoke," rejoined Mr. Twaddle; "I wish Lady Jane was here, to say as much of Joey; thof, according to right, she ought to say more, for he has more money than Biddy—that you have, my lad; and more learning, too."

Joey said, "As to learning, he did not see what good it did any woman, unless it was to make her conceited; and as to fortune, his sister had more than enough of that, he thought; but he

 should

should learn what his share was to be, before he agreed to her having so much—for it ought to be considered, she was to marry a man who made her a lady; and for his part, he saw no great good in his having a lady for his wife, as she could not make him a Lord, or any thing more than simple Mr. Twaddle."

Lord Felix, thinking this an opportunity at least to make an effort to serve his sister, by alarming the pride of the young man, eagerly commended his way of thinking, adding, "Were I in your place, I would not marry the first duchess in the kingdom; for, as you most sensibly observe, you will never be any thing but *simple* Mr. Twaddle. Those ladies always give themselves airs, and look down upon their husbands. I do not speak particularly of my sister, who would be quite as high-minded as any of them, were she your wife; but

that

that she cannot be, as she is already engaged."

"What is that you say, my Lord," cried Mr. Twaddle, "Lady Jane not have my son? Then I'll be damn'd if you shall have my daughter."

The Earl interrupted him, entreating he would pay no attention to the folly that came from that young man, who spoke without knowing why, or even what he said.

Mr. Twaddle replied, "He would know on what ground he stood, before he went one step further; he had no mind to be jockied; as to that matter, he could always get plenty of both wives and husbands for his children; so if his Earlship would please to redeem his estates, and pay him, besides, all the money he owed him, and for which he had nothing but his bond, he might take his son and his daughter to a better market."

 The

The Earl, not daring to resent, what he nevertheless felt to be an insult, sullenly replied, If the engagements were not fulfilled, the failure would not rest with his family, and left the room. The Alderman and his son following his example, left Lord Felix to ruminate on the past conversation, by which he was convinced of the truth of all his father had said respecting his situation with Mr. Twaddle; as to himself he felt not much concern. A wife of any kind was not in the catalogue of his agreeables; but his grandfather had sometimes told him, he must marry; and his necessities, for such he termed his desires, had always told him he must have a great deal of money. This he had intended to procure by having a rich wife, and a rich wife he should have in Biddy: but then his friends would laugh at him, and at his wife's defects. Would not her prodigious fortune hide those defects?

defects? If not, would it be impossible to hide her all together? Certainly not; as, to use ceremony with a rustic, would be ridiculous. Then, where lay the great evil? To himself—he saw none; or none, save what the good more than compensated. His sister, he certainly pitied her; yet that was of no use; nor could he serve her in any other way, so things must take their course.

Here his meditation was interrupted by the entrance of Miss Twaddle. His Lordship having just determined ceremony to be unnecessary, seized the hand of his intended bride, and putting his lips to her's, gave her half a dozen rapid kisses, for which he received a box on his ear, that made him reel, and set the lady laughing most violently. This somewhat encouraged her lover, who, from the weight of the blow, had began to conceive he had mortally offended; but not having any

desire for a repetition of her favours, he stood at a moderate distance, while he exclaimed,

"You young vixen, I was going to court you."

"And is that the way you Lunnuners begin?" asked she.

"Yes, certainly," was the reply.

"By goles, that's very odd, for it is the very way we country folks finish," said Miss Twaddle.

"Then you *have* finished," returned Edward, "or how could you know?"

A loud laugh was the only answer he received: as soon as an opportunity offered, he proceeded:

"But you and I are to be married, Biddy, so there can be no harm in my taking a kiss or two—that's all agreed."

"Is it?" inquired the lady.

"O yes! quite settled," said his Lordship.

"Very

"Very well," said she, "it is all settled with me, too, except having my own consent: may be that in Lunnun is not quite necessary; but, by goles, he that marries me, shall ask me as well as father. It is just as the parson told me, you Lunnuners are all for yourselves, and think you do us country folks honour enough by taking us, because you cannot get at our money without it; now I am for no such honours; so Mr. my Lord, your servant;" and off she was running, when his Lordship falling on both his knees, exclaimed:

"Stay, lovely Biddy, most accomplished of fair ones, or the victim of your cruelty dies this moment."

Before it could be decided what effect this pathetic speech would have, the Earl and Mr. Twaddle entered the room. Biddy seemed disconcerted; but Lord Felix, nothing abashed, continued:

"Iron-hearted maiden, are you bent on murder—will not one word from those beauteous lips say, Felix, you may live; Biddy Twaddle is your own?"

The Alderman, who literally concluded his daughter had refused his Lordship, ran to him, and putting an arm through one of his, dragged him from his humble position, swearing if she did not have him, she should beg in the streets; while the young lady, frightened by her father's violence, thought proper to escape from it; which, as soon as Mr. Twaddle perceived, increased his rage. He begged the lover to be comforted, as he would shortly bring her back, and make her ax his pardon, or break her neck: so saying, he went to fulfil his promise.

The Earl, now alone with his son, sternly asked him, what this foolery meant.

Edward replied, "Your Lordship may

term

term it what you please, but I have had a cursed tussle—I am quite out of breath."

"A tussle—with whom—or for what?"

"With whom? Why, with Miss Biddy Twaddle."

"And for what?"

"Why, for your Lordship's bonds."

"Descend from this mummery, Sir, and let me understand you."

"This, then, my Lord, is the very essence of the business—Miss Biddy Twaddle gave me a pretty plain hint, that matters had gone rather far between the parson of this parish and herself; and that she liked his doctrine better than my title. I thought of your Lordship's estates—I felt alarmed for the fate of your bonds—but above all, I trembled for my own snug farm, and eighty thousand pounds. I saw no time was to be lost; and I do flatter myself, had I not been

interrupted,

interrupted, I should e'er this, have rivalled the parson."

The Earl was not in a temper to endure this conversation; for, trifling as it was, there were parts of it which applied too closely to himself to be misunderstood. He therefore said, "I had hoped, Lord Felix, that the knowledge you have of my situation, and the circumstances which compel me to comply with the extravagant propositions of this old, ambitious knave, would have at least prevailed on you to perform your duty in silence; but, as I perceive I had given you credit for feelings you do not possess, I think it necessary to remind you, that I am your father, and will be treated as such; and that in rendering this young woman an object of ridicule, you are lessening the respectability of your future wife."

So saying, he left him; and meeting his

his intended son-in-law, they went together to Lady Jane's apartment, where after some inquiries respecting her health, he hurried away, leaving the young man with her Ladyship.

What the Alderman had said of estates and bonds, had placed the affairs of both families in quite a new light to this youth; and in so doing, had destroyed the little humility or good manners, which he possessed; for no sooner was the door closed, than winking at his companion, he cried, "The old buck's up to a thing or two—he knew you and I wanted to have a bit of chat together.

He then seated himself on the sopha, beside Lady Jane, familiarly throwing his arm round her waist, and taking her hand.

Shocked and affrighted, she arose, and was hastening out of the room, when recollecting herself, she stopped, and after pausing a moment, returned, and placing

herself

herself on a chair opposite her highly offended lover, she begged he would give her a patient hearing for a few moments, as there were circumstances relative to herself, with which she held it indispensably necessary to make him acquainted.

She then proceeded to inform him, that from her earliest power of distinguishing, her affections had been given to a gentleman who had solicited and received her parent's approbation—that having so long beheld him as the arbiter of her fate, she felt a conviction, that he could never be indifferent to her; and that, let her future destiny be what it might, she should never cease to repine at the event which had severed her from the only man she ever did or could love.

Had her Ladyship known the temper of the being she was addressing, she would have spared herself the painful and useless confession—had she known the very

very idea of possessing what constituted the happiness of another, was the highest gratification he could feel, she would have seen she was arming him against herself; but judging from her own benevolent, elegant mind, she imagined her person unaccompanied by her heart, would prove the greatest calamity that could be imposed. From this conviction, she had made him master of her sentiments, and waited his rejection with all the composure which the thought of her father's disappointment would admit.

Conceive, then, her astonishment, when reaching forward, and taking both her hands, he said, looking, at the same time, saucily in her face :—

" And so, miss, you are in love?—Well, that's a bad job; but, I think, when you and I have courted a little, you will get the better of all that.—Your sweetheart will not be the only person who will

will look glum at our marriage, I can assure you. I do not mean to brag, but there is one who would give all the money in her pocket to be in your place on Thursday next."

"On Thursday!" cried the terrified lady.—"Where? what am I to be on Thursday?"

"As to the where," replied her unfeeling companion, "you will be just where you are now, unless you would like to go a little jaunt for pleasure, to which I shall have no objection; as, I am told, wedding-days are but dull kind of things; but as to the what, why, you will be my wife; so it is time we sealed the bargain."

Thus saying, he pulled her rudely to him; when a violent shriek from the lady, prevented the salute he had intended, and brought the Earl, with Miss Twaddle, into the room.

Lady Jane threw herself at her father's feet,

feet, clasping his kness, and raising her eye to his, with a look which needed not words to tell the agony she felt, but was incapable to utter. He raised, and supported her to a seat, where a flood of tears probably prolonged a life, the bitterness of which, rendered it a burthen to its lovely, but unfortunate possessor. When a little recovered, she thanked Miss Twaddle for her attentions; and requested to be left with her father.

As soon as they were alone, she again fell at his feet; but it was not his interest to let her speak: he, therefore, pressed her to his bosom, calling her his saviour —his deliverer—reminding her that her promise had saved him from destruction, here and hereafter—that Thursday was the day appointed for restoring his long-tortured heart to peace—and for pointing her out to future ages, as the most dutiful, and heroic of daughters. He then pressed

pressed her lips several times, still expressing his gratitude—it was the kiss of Judas, given to betray.

Tenderness, to which she was so unused, penetrated the soul of the ill-fated Lady Jane, and gave to her deeply-wounded bosom a sensation resembling pleasure. She partook in the happiness of her father, though it had been purchased by the destruction of her own; until he, mistaking the composure of her looks, ventured to mention his hope, that her intended husband would, before the day chosen for the celebration of the marriage ceremony, have rendered himself more agreeable to her.

With a wildness bordering on phrenzy, she besought him, if he valued his own peace—if he wished or expected her compliance on that day, so terrible to her idea, he would prevent any further interview between her and the master of

her

her evil destiny, until they were at the altar.

It was in vain the Earl remonstrated; she, with a firmness, which she had supposed impossible, assured him his hopes from her rested on this request being granted. His situation was too critical to stand on punctilio, therefore, although he foresaw the performance would embarrass him with the young man, if not his family, he promised. She solemnly thanked him; and added, she should use the intermediate time in preparing for the awful hour, after which, she should be the wife of the man he had chosen; and she trusted all the good he had in view would be secured, at the least, it would be out of her power to obstruct it.

The Earl withdrew, for the first time in his life, sensible of his own littleness; but even this feeling could not avert his

purpose—

purpose—self was his God; and had the happiness of a world been placed in competition with this idol, that world had, like his beautiful, unoffending daughter, been given up to ruin.

On his joining the family, he lamented the absence of Lady Jane, who, he said, felt some symptoms of a former complaint, to prevent which, as well as that she might find herself in a situation to fulfil her engagement on Thursday, it was necessary she should remain undisturbed in her apartment until that time.

The Alderman, with a sagacious look, remarked, that her Ladyship was perfectly right, as a third person, on those occasions, was very troublesome. He remembered he had found it so, when his dame and he were courting. Then winking at his son, he added, "Well, Joey, you see what is expected from you—

apron-

apron-string work, my lad, but never mind, Thursday will soon be here, and then it will be your turn to rule."

The Earl, in the best manner he could, explained what he had said, assuring the sulky lover, the thought had been of his own suggesting; and that his daughter had reluctantly complied, although convinced of the propriety.

Mrs. Twaddle said, "She heartily hoped her Ladyship had taken no dislike to Joey, as she should be wastly sorry to see so fine a young lady unhappy." Her husband told her to hold her fool's tongue; and asked what any body could dislike in Joey? Was not he as stout a lad as you would meet? And had he not money to buy half a dozen ladies?

She begged pardon, but thought as how my lady might happen to like some other person, and that might make her not like Joey so well. The Alderman bade

bade her mind her pigs and poultry, which was more suited to her comprehension. She said, she believed so; and humbly went to put the order in practice.

Lord Felix had so wearied himself by romping with his Dulcinea, whose agility in running, climbing, and jumping, had required his utmost exertion to preserve even an equality with, that he felt no regret at the early hour allotted for retirement; particularly as the lady, more habituated to violent exercise, was still inclined to mirth, and diverted herself with some hearty fits of laughter at his expence. From her wit, he took refuge in his chamber, and would gladly have recruited his strength by sleep, had he not recollected, that something ought to be said to Lady Susan Trelawney, on the turn their affairs had taken since he had left town; but whether that something should be in the apologetic and consolatory

latory state, he was undetermined; and as thinking on any subject was not a favourite employment with his Lordship, he took his pen and wrote as follows:

"I do not know whether to congratu-
"late or condole with my dear Lady Su-
"san, on the loss of her ci-devant lover,
"inasmuch as I am rather doubtful in
"what light she will consider that event,
"which doubt, has occasioned my defer-
"ring sooner to acquaint her with the
"particulars, as I shall be really concern-
"ed to give her any uneasiness or morti-
"fication; and should, besides, have been
"very happy in fulfilling the agreement
"entered into by our respective fathers;
"nor is it any fault of mine that we do
"not tread the paths of Hymên together.
"But parental authority is not to be dis-
"puted, as I remember your Ladyship
"informed me when you received me as
"your intended husband; yet, it took

"some time to convince me, that any "thing could be more to my interest, "than the devoting my life to the divi- "nity of the fashionable world, the lovely "Lady Susan Trelawney, until my father "gave me such weighty reasons for "the alteration of his former, as over- "powered my objections to conceding "with his present plan. What these rea- "sons are, it is not necessary to trouble "you with; nor is it necessary to tres- "pass on your time farther, than while I "say, I am on Thursday next to lead to "the altar the lovely Miss Biddy Twad- "dle: a lady whose accomplishments are "at once both brilliant and solid, and of "a nature so rare, in these degenerate "days, as to render them a mine of en- "joyments; my value of which, I hope to "evince by the use I shall make of them.

"I am aware it will be said, every "lover has the same dreams of his mis-

"tress's

" tress's abilities, but I do not dream;
" for she has this day given me such in-
" contestable proofs of the inexhaustible
" strength, as well as the variety of her
" talents, as make me, at this moment,
" feel, I must never more pretend to any
" thing like equality with this delicate
" portion of the weaker sex—the all-ac-
" complished Miss Biddy Twaddle, of
" Blue-Bell Manor, whose qualifications
" will, although I feel they throw me at
" a distance, retain my adoration, so long
" as they retain their glittering, their
" sterling value.

" But, I entreat my dear Lady Susan's
" pardon, for so long detaining her from
" that world she admires, and by which
" she is admired, particularly at a time
" when she has it 'all before her where to
" choose.' May Providence guide her, as
" it has done her friend, into a land flow-
" ing with milk and honey; she will then

"cease to regret, if she ever did regret,
"the disappointment which has attend-
"ed, I believe, her first matrimonial spe-
"culation, and again cast the eye of ap-
"probation on,

"Her admiring friend,

"E. FELIX."

Having finished what he thought an appropriate epistle, he hastened to recruit his strength, after the fatigues of the day, by a sound sleep; in which blessing, I wish the historian could add, he was accompanied by his lovely, luckless, sister. But my readers must have already seen enough of her to convince them, that this world contained not that "sweet oblivious antidote, which could pluck from her memory the rooted sorrow that weighed upon her heart." Far, very far different were her sensations from those of her heedless brother, although her employment had been the same; for she, too,

too, had been conveying to her lover the disappointment of his hopes, and as the contrast between the two letters may not be unpleasing, I shall here present her Ladyship's.

" May that merciful Power, who seems " to have abandoned me, look with com- " passion on my once loved—— Once " loved, did I say?—On my still—my " ever idolized Charles! May it steel his " heart, or root from it every remem- " brance of the wretched—the ruined " Jane!—May it pour all that peace, and " all those blissful hopes, which have been " torn from mine, into his bosom.

" Oh, Charles, I am undone! The " only possible comfort I can ever know, " must be derived from the knowledge " that the desolation which has laid waste " my heart has not reached your's. In " pity, then—in mercy—tell me, you for-

 " give

"give me; tell me, that my faithlessness "does not affect you. Oh, say that you "are happy, and that you do not curse "me.—But, whither do I wander?—I "deprecate your anger, without telling "you the cause.

"This, then, it is:—My father—— It "is impossible!—My intellect will not "suffice to give a circumstantial detail of "events that have destroyed me. All I "can tell you, is, that before this reaches "you, I shall be the wife of another; and "that, the only consolation my soul re-"tains, arises from the certainty, that the "man to whom I give my hand, will "ever be the being upon earth most ob-"noxious to my heart; and that in wed-"ding him, I take to my bosom ceaseless "wretchedness.

"You will readily conceive my father "to be the author of this mischief; but "do not suppose it was to his *commands* I

"yielded.

"yielded. No, Charles, his tyranny "could not have shaken—it was his en"treaty that subdued me; he knelt and "wept;—knelt to his daughter;—bathed "my hands with his tears, and conjured "me to save him from poverty—nay, "more, from dishonour! My soul was "penetrated; my senses terrified; I "swore, without knowing the magni"tude of his petition; I cannot recal my "oath, and am lost beyond the reach of "human aid. Waste not, therefore, one "thought upon me; remember, that to "know you partake my sufferings, is the "only augmentation they can receive.

"JANE FELIX."

CHAP. IV.

THE morning appointed for these nuptials arrived, and the parties, excepting Lady Jane, were assembled. The Earl went to her apartment, not without a feeling strongly resembling fear, but which was dissipated on entering, as he found her ready to attend him. She held out her hand;—it trembled as he took it. He attempted to commend her duty, and express his gratitude. She motioned him to be silent; and, hurrying on, joined the family.

Her appearance seemed, for a moment, to strike an awe into all present. Her form was of the most lovely; her manners

manners at once dignified and graceful; her dress of the whitest cambric, was rivalled only by the paleness of her cheek; a muslin handkerchief encircled her head, over which was tied a white veil of the finest lace, which was thrown back so as partly to shade the heart-broken countenance that was beneath. She courtsied, and would have given the salutation of the morning, but her voice failed, and she seated herself in silence.

The carriages were announced. She was amongst the first who prepared to go to them. When arrived at the church, she approached the altar with a steady step and unvarying countenance, which she preserved until the clergyman demanded, If she would have that man to her husband? when, with a distinct and audible voice, she answered, "Yes;" and, as if this was the utmost effort her

gentle nature could endure, sunk, lifeless, in her brother's arms.

Her death-like appearance, as well as the duration of the fit, led those around her to suppose, she would never be in a situation to complete her vow. Happy had it been for this hapless victim to the abandoned vices and unfeeling selfishness of a father, had their conjectures been verified; she would then have escaped from years overflowing with bitterness. On her return to life, she apologized for her weakness, and requested the ceremony might proceed, which it did accordingly. This finished, she received the congratulations offered her, with a look that at once bespoke thanks for their good wishes, and a certainty that they never could be realized.

On their return home, the noisy mirth of Lord Felix, and Lady Felix; the vulgar

gar remarks of the Alderman, with the familiar fondness of young Twaddle, were more than all her endeavours could support. She flew to her apartment; and throwing herself on the floor, gave vent to the agonies of her heart. In the same breath she accused Heaven of injustice, in the unmerited evils she had endured, and implored its mercy to save her from a yet more dreaded ill.

Worn by the various conflicts she had struggled with, she had ceased to complain, and was laying in a state of stupor, when the happy Lady Felix bounced into the room, calling to know if she would not have a bit of lunch before dinner. On seeing Lady Jane, she ran back, and alarmed the family: they raised her from the ground, and she regained recollection sufficient to request to be put to bed, and left to herself. This her sister undertook to see performed, and the rest quitted the

room; the disappointed bridegroom, muttering as he went, that he seemed to have made a pretty job of work of it; if that was having a Lady-wife, he should be sick enough of his bargain.

His father did not seem to estimate Lady Jane much higher, for he several times hinted to Lord Felix what a lucky dog he was to have a healthy, merry wife, from whom he need not look for any fits or whimperings. The night arrived, and the wretched Jane felt her petition to the throne of grace had been rejected, for it saw her consigned to the arms of a man, for whom she had, at her first interview, conceived a sentiment more strong than mere dislike, and which had been augmented by disgust, at their only meeting since, previous to this inauspicious marriage.

The following day at dinner, the Earl ned his intention of returning to

town the next morning, whither he was called on business of importance. Lord Felix said that was exceedingly fortunate, as he also had business in London, and could have a seat in his Lordship's carriage. The Alderman's impatience and astonishment would scarcely suffer him to swallow the half of a fine tench, which he had at that moment conveyed into his mouth, when he sputtered out,

"Gad-zooks! well, if this does not beat all I ever heard, the devil is in't—a bridegroom has business in town, to leave his bride in two days."

"I agree with you, Mr. Twaddle," said the Earl—"it is somewhat strange—indeed so much so, that I hope Edward has affixed more of consequence to this journey, than on examination it will be found to deserve; and in that case I may be able to spare him so unpleasant a

separation

separation from Lady Felix, by acting as his chargé d' affaires."

"Aye, aye, that will do," exclaimed the Alderman, "now tell us your business. His Lordship, I warrant you, will manage it better than you can; he does not mind trouble."

Lord Felix, vexed at his father's interference, replied, he had within his reach too many proofs of his father's management and activity to leave a doubt upon his mind either of his abilities to perform, or willingness to undertake any office in which it was not decorous for his friends to appear; but, unfortunately in this case, he could not profit by his Lordship's condescension, as his present business depended upon taste, in which he meant to consult himself in future.

Lady Felix, who had affixed no other idea to the word taste, than what be-

longed

longed to a cap or bonnet, conceived he meant to purchase something pretty for her, and begged it might be either pink or yellow, as those colours became her best. While he, eager to enjoy the fruits of his late sacrifice, caught with avidity at her seeming approbation, and determined to turn her folly to his advantage.

Taking her hand with great good humour, he said, "My dear girl has, indeed, guessed my purpose: it is to prepare those decorations which her beauty and my rank require."

The Earl saw that his son was likely to carry his point, and his presence in town at this time being the thing on earth he most wished to avoid, he urged the impropriety of his being seen in London, without having been presented at St. James's on his marriage; but this was soon obviated, by his saying, that he

would go through that ceremony at the first drawing-room.

His father hesitated, but at length said, "What! without your wife? No, you must wait for her."

This was the first time Edward had entertained an idea of Biddy Twaddle ever being seen at court; but any thing was preferable to remaining where he was. He therefore observed, he could not see any reason why she might not accompany him, and get it over at once. A look from the Earl convinced him, that the idea of presentation had only been to obtain delay; and that it was now in his power to revenge himself, by turning his own weapons against him, and this he executed to his utmost wish, by calling to his aid the pride and self-love both of the father and son.

To this end he affected not to under-

stand

stand the look he had received; but turning to young Twaddle, said, "Do you not, brother, mean to make your bow on the occasion; surely you do, and you too, Mr. Alderman; I can tell you his Majesty will be surprised if you do not."

The Alderman, to whom the idea of going to court had then occurred for the the first time in his life, was at a loss to determine what he ought to do; but looking wistfully in Edward's face, he inquired if he really thought the King would expect it.

To which his Lordship replied, "Most undoubtedly, or he will not have any very high opinion of your loyalty—only reflect, the rich Mr. Twaddle, brother by marriage to the Earl of Belmont, not to shew himself at St. James's on such an occasion."

"Nay, nay," cried the Alderman, "I will go—we will all go—who knows but

but I may come in for a contract, when the King is acquainted with me."

During this conversation, the Earl's eyes were angrily fixed on the unvarying countenance of his son, who he supposed to be at his favourite employment of quizzing, until the earnestness of all the parties, compelled him to believe they were serious. He hastened to ridicule Lord Felix's opinon, and to express his own, that their attendance would be most readily dispensed with; but the Alderman, who had in this short space, assured himself of a snug contract, was not to be talked out of the means to obtain it, and in a few blunt words, convinced the Earl, not only that he was determined, but that he was as much displeased with him for his opposition, as he had been delighted with Lord Felix for his proposal, which forced the Earl, though most unwillingly, to yield his approbation, without

without any other qualification than the delay of one month; and according to this arrangement he left Blue-Bell Manor, unaccompanied by any of the family, the following morning, with full powers to settle and provide every thing for the quintuple presentation.

Nor was it Lord Felix's fault that Mrs. Twaddle was not to be of the party; as he had used exertions, for him most uncommon, to prove the positive necessity of her assisting at the ceremony; nor could his father's commanding brow, and stern demand, if he was mad, in the least abate his ardour. He repeated his wish, that her Majesty should be acquainted with his Biddy's mother, until the old lady, whose heart overflowed with good-nature, was on the point of giving up her own objections to his importunities, had not the mention of a hoop's being an indispensable part of the court dress, at

once

once overthrew the whole of his arguments. Yet, willing to soften his disappointment, she assured him she would go to Lunnun with him, and, while there, to all the fine places, where she need not have a hoop. To this compromise he was obliged to accede, though far from being content; yet he comforted himself with the hope of still deriving much amusement from the display of his new relations, and the mortification of his old ones.

The Earl's departure restored the inhabitants of Blue-Bell Manor to their accustomed occupations—that is, Mrs. Twaddle to the entire management of her pigs, and kitchen; and Lady Felix, to the dairy and poultry-yard; while the Alderman, who had the honour of being the creditor of nearly every nobleman within an hundred miles of the manor, employed himself in friendly excursions to the

the mansions of those who were within a morning's ride, just to remind them he was alive; while Mr. Joey, finding no enjoyment in looking at the mournful countenance of his wife, or in listening to her deep-drawn sighs, renewed a flirtation with a farmer's daughter, between which, and his dogs and horses, he pretty equally divided his time, to the infinite gratification of the unfortunate Lady Jane, whose only source of comfort was derived from his decided neglect, and evident indifference, which allowed her to weep in solitude, over the ruin of her once bright prospects. Devoid of hope, she encouraged despair; and yielding herself to its baneful influence, refused the few consolations her niggard fate had left her: even the society of the brother she fondly loved, was now intolerable to her—his efforts, with those of the well-meaning Mrs. Twaddle, and of her good-

natured

natured daughter, to console or amuse her, were equally disregarded.

This contributed to render Lord Felix's situation very irksome; he had no one to speak to. His wife, indeed, he might have found, by going either to the dairy or the poultry-yard; but she was so fond of romping, and handling him so roughly, that he would at any time have rather gone a mile round, than encounter her. Joey spoke of dogs and horses, and laughed at him for not understanding what he said. He was equally distressed for something to do; not that he was fond of actual employment, but something just to pass the time, was necessary. Certainly, he might ride or walk, but it must be by himself—a companion he had never felt any great predilection for. In this state of stagnation, he was gratified, on the return of a servant from the nearest market-town, on receiving a letter;

ter; and, although the signature of Susan Trelawney did not promise much, it was a letter—it brought with it variety, and would occupy five minutes of that time which hung so heavy on his hands. He eagerly opened it, and read as follows.

"LADY SUSAN TRELAWNEY TO LORD FELIX.

"I really think, my Lord, as our "papas suggested the match between us "—made love for us—promised for us "—and consented for us, they should "have gone through the whole drudgery, "without giving us the trouble of writing "and reading letters, which is at this "time exceedingly inconvenient to me; "and, though in your rusticated situa-"tion, you may, possibly, nay, proba-"bly, have more leisure than I, who "have all the world before me, where to "choose; yet, would it have been as well

"for

"for them to have settled the whole "affair, without consulting us. For, as "they have managed it, in the conclu-"sion, people may be led to suppose, "that we had something to do with the "beginning, of which I, in my con-"science, acquit you, as well as myself.

"The beginning and the end of our "engagements were equally indifferent "to us, and should have been equally "without our interference; but as we "have been dutiful in trifles, they now "exact the same compliance from us in "affairs of greater magnitude—no less "than dedicating, at the least, half an "hour of our precious time to each other, "an occupation which, I believe, we "neither of us conceived to be in the "bargain they had made, and against "which I certainly should have pro-"tested, had not your setting the exam-"ple of obedience, imposed a sort of ne-

"cessity

"cessity on me to follow it, which I do, "by hereby acknowledging the receipt "of your *kind* letter; for the which, I "cannot but feel myself eternally obliged "to you, and am very glad to find Pro-"vidence has been so good as to give "you some land.

"I have always heard Providence "could perform wonders; and, truly, I "begin now to believe it; but as to its "flowing with milk and honey, I am "uncertain what to say: the milk, in-"deed, is a good article, but it is apt to "turn sour; and honey is exceedingly "cloying. These defects you will pro-"bably say you can remedy, by getting "rid of the land; and undoubtedly no "person should be more competent to "act in those affairs, if knowledge is in-"heritable; yet, I think, I have heard "you remarked, as deriving nothing "from your ancestors. But it is great

 "presumption

"presumption in me to talk to you of "sours, and cloying, and getting rid of "land, and such matters, with which "your Lordship is so much better ac-"quainted. I will therefore hasten to "tell you, that on reading your letter, "I trembled to shew it to my father, lest "he should insist on your fulfilling your "engagement with such an airy nothing "as myself, to the total annihilation of "your promised possessions—your land "—your milk—your honey—and your "accomplished mistress, Miss Biddy "Twaddle, of Blue-Bell Manor.

"I said I trembled when I gave it "him—how then must I have rejoiced "when he returned it with a smile, say-"ing, 'Well, my dear, I am convinced "there can be nothing in that stupid "epistle but what must give you plea-"sure.'

"I bowed, and he proceeded:

'To

'To tell you the truth, Susan, I ever " thought you deserving of a better hus- " band than Lord Felix; he may do very " well for Miss Twaddle, and Miss Twad- " dle for him. But now, confess the " truth; have you not looked to some- " thing higher than to such a simpleton " as his Lordship?'

"I thought it would be impolite to " interrupt him, so I only bowed again, " while he continued to make some other " remarks upon you, much in the same " stile. Although there was nothing new " in these observations, yet I recollect he " rather surprised me, by saying, your " father was a younger man than your- " self—and vastly handsomer—vastly " cleverer—and vastly more tonish. Here " I did venture to defend you; for I ob- " served, however I might admit the " strength of his other remarks, I could " not conceive how he could be younger

"than your Lordship, being, most as-"suredly, born before you; but my ar-"gument availed nothing, for it was "settled, that though you were very "young, indeed, yet the Earl was "younger.

"There is a part of your letter on "which I am somewhat at a loss, whether "to compliment you on your humility, "or decry your want of discernment; "yet, as the former quality is the newest "acquirement, it ought, as a stranger, "to have the precedence. I shall there-"fore observe, that your not knowing "whether to congratulate, or condole "with me, on the loss of my ci-devant "lover, proves you are uncertain whe-"ther I may not have gained by that "loss, which is extremely amiable in "you, and well judging, though it un-"doubtedly speaks you blind, not only "to your own powers, but to the esti-

"mation

"mation in which I held them. I could "certainly inform you, and without "much deliberation, to which I am en- "titled, were I not in haste to entreat "you will not feel the most trifling con- "cern on my account, as I should be "unhappy if I entertained the most dis- "tant idea of giving you the slightest "cause of being really uneasy. But I "am writing quite a volume; I shall, "therefore, only add my most ardent "wishes, that both the brilliant and so- "lid accomplishments of your Biddy, "may be so closely attached to her per- "son as to render it impossible to separate "them; and that she may live until you, "wearied with your mine of enjoyments, "seek the mansions of the grave; there "to wait her arrival, to participate what "ever of pains or pleasures another world "may have in store for you.

"Long as my letter is, I cannot con-
"clude without expressing my gratitude
"for your wish, that Providence may
"do as much for me as it has for your-
"self; which, indeed, seems its present
"intention, as my father informs me I
"am in a few days to have a partner in my
"cares; but as cares are aukward things
"to divide, I mean to make this elect
"of his Lordship's the sole possessor,
"and thus leave the larger space for my
"pleasures, in which I do not intend to
"be selfish, but liberally partake them
"with the world in general; so that we
"may, possibly, meet; in which case, I
"think I may venture to assure you of
"being viewed with the same eye of
"approbation your manifold virtues have
"hitherto commanded. Till when, I shall
"look forward with impatience to the
"hour in which I can present to you the
"future master of my cares, and be made
"known

"known to the mistress of your plea-
"sures. In my acquaintance with the
"latter, I am prepared, by your own ac-
"count, to be astonished; nor am I
"without hope of astonishing you in re-
"turn.

"SUSAN TRELAWNEY."

CHAP. V.

WE left Lord Felix perusing the letter from his late intended bride, with which he was not greatly displeased; and although he termed it cursedly malicious, he would have been content to have received one equally provoking, on each of the tedious days he was yet to pass at Blue-Bell Manor.

Long as those days appeared, they at length drew to a conclusion, and the commotion this occasioned in the family, served, in some degree, to relieve his excessive weariness. Perhaps, the most extatic moments of his life were those of the day previous to his departure.—His usual

usual indolence forsook him ;—he hurried and assisted every individual of the party—master, servants, and horses, were alike the objects of his attention, until he observed that Mrs. Twaddle was more occupied in providing for her return to the manor, than in preparing for leaving it. Dreading the delay this might occasion, he ceased his civilities to all the rest, and attached himself solely to her ; and truly, a severe time he had of it, for that good lady had not only more baggage than all the rest of the company, to pack, but more occupations to detain her from doing it. She was in every part of the premises ;—brewing ale and beer—making bacon—salting butter—weighing out provision for the pigs, poultry, and servants ; and portioning work for the latter were amongst her employments.

It was in vain that his Lordship followed and entreated ; he had no sooner fixed

her at her trunks, than she recollected something else she must immediately regulate, and away she trotted. Even on the morning of their departure, when he conceived he had conquered every difficulty, and was congratulating himself on the speedy reward of his persevering industry, a business remained to be settled, on which he had not calculated, and which threatened a most serious delay.

This was no other than providing for, not only the present, but the future health of the parish; for Mrs. Twaddle was a doctress, and those who were sick, or those who thought they might be sick, were alike anxious to receive her advice and her medicine. Dispensing the latter, nearly exhausted his patience; but when he saw her engaging in the former, he was driven to despair, until, recollecting there was one thing in the world she preferred to talking, and judging that any change

change must be for the better, he gravely requested her to indulge him with a visit to the piggery, before their departure.

This was more than she could withstand; forgetting, in one instant, both patients and medicines, she led the way with all the speed her short legs and corpulent frame would admit. His Lordship followed, rejoicing at the success of his stratagem; but his self-applause was of no long duration, for he quickly perceived that her present employment was more hopeless, than that from which he had taken her. That, indeed, must have ceased some time or other, for want of breath; but this, oh, this! nothing less than a miracle could operate in his favour. He cursed his own folly, the pigs, and the whole race of Twaddles; swore, if once without the gates of Blue-Bell Manor, not all the invention of man should ever induce him again to enter them.

He began seriously to meditate on the cruelty of separating this good soul from friends so congenial to her feelings; and was on the point, greatly as it would break in upon his plan of happiness, to propose her remaining with them, when the angry voice of the Alderman, shouting, "Halloo! Nell where the devil are you got to?—Am I to be robbed and have my throat cut on the road, for you and your cursed pigs? What—son Edward here, too?—Why, it is twelve o' clock;—what has your Lordship been thinking of all this while?" Edward gravely replied, "I have been thinking that every pig was an infernal bore."

Mrs. Twaddle was naturally mild; but a worm will turn when trod upon, and she conceived herself greatly affronted in the beloved persons of her favourites, and with some spirit, replied, "In the first place he knew nothing of the matter, for

for there happened to be more sows than boars amongst them; and as for their being infernal, she did not think he had been so *illiberate*, because the devil had entered into some of the poor things, as to suppose all of them must be in the same way; for her part, she believed they weren't a morsel more infernal than other people."

As far as boar went, his Lordship perceived she had mistaken his meaning; but as to the remainder of the discourse, where she spoke of the devil having entered some of the poor things, he was not versed enough in scripture to make any thing of it; but he saw that he had affronted her, and his plan was to keep her in good humour, at least, with himself. To this end he said, "Don't be angry, Mama Twaddle, I did not mean any affront to the pigs or you—I love you both

too

too well." She was pacified, and followed the alderman to where the carriages waited.

A coach and a post-chaise were allotted for their conveyance, and every arrangement having been made by the old gentleman, they were told that himself and wife, with Lord and Lady Felix were to occupy the coach, and leave the chaise to Joey and Lady Jane. At this decision the countenance of the latter betrayed evident tokens of horror, and her eyes were turned with a look of supplication to her brother; but perceiving his feelings were not acute enough to enter into her's, she withdrew them, and sought those of her sister's with more success; for the good-natured Biddy understood and sympathized in her distress. Nor was she long in relieving it, for she declared she hated a coach, and would go in the chaise with Lady Jane, and they might take

Joey.

Joey with them in her place. To this Lord Felix strongly objected, and for this reason, he preferred the company of his merry wife to that of her sulky brother: yet the probability of his sister being of the same way of thinking had not occcurred to him, nor ever would, in all likelihood, had he not in the midst of his objections, been interrupted by a violent pull at the skirt of his coat and the words, "What a fool you are;" while, "Don't you know how your sister hates him?" at the same time, in a whisper reached his ear.

This gentle hint from Lady Felix, effectually checked his harangue, and opened his eyes, when he regretted the momentary pain he had occasioned, although he was at a loss what reason to assign for his sudden change of sentiments. His frolicksome wife waited not for his assistance, but jumping into the chaise, called out,

"Here

"Here I am, for one; the rest of you may go as you like." At the same time screwing up her mouth at his Lordship, and rolling her eyes towards his sister, who he immediately handed into the carriage, and seating himself between them, bade the driver go on, which he did, before any farther objections could be made. Nothing was left for the rest but to follow the young Squire, who was in a humour that must quickly cause his companions to regret, that the first arrangement had not taken place.

As Lord Felix's pleasure in travelling consisted in going more miles in each hour than any other person, he was in town a full day before the remainder of his party. It being early in the morning when he arrived, he drove to a hotel, and thence dispatched a messenger to inform the Earl of his arrival, whilst the ladies,

excessively

excessively fatigued by the rapidity of their journey, retired to seek a few hours rest.

They had but just rejoined him, when his father's carriage stopped at the door. Lady Jane went to the stairs to receive him, but found herself in the arms of Lady Susan Trelawney, who saw with astonishment, the desolation which a few weeks had made in her late lovely and yet highly interesting friend. She hurried her back to the apartment, with stronger symptoms of emotion than it was usual with her Ladyship to feel, at least to discover; for fashion had been the nurse of Lady Susan, and fashion disclaims all connection with humanity. Fortunately for her future fame, she soon recollected this, and dashing off a vagrant tear, which was on the point of disgracing her cheek, she turned to Edward, who with some degree of embarrassment was approaching

proaching

proaching her, and rejecting his offered hand, gave him her's to kiss, while she gravely blessed him, assuring him, that while he behaved with duty and propriety, in her he should ever find an indulgent parent.

Lady Jane's spirits were too depressed to enter into this trifling; she therefore begged to introduce Lady Felix to the notice of her friend; but on turning to receive her, all Lady Susan's gravity vanished, and she burst into a violent laugh, to the no small dismay of all the party; but more particularly of Lady Jane, whose delicate mind felt more for Lady Felix, than she on that occasion felt for herself.

With a view to divert her friend's attention from the unsuspecting object of her mirth, on whom she still gazed with unceasing laughter, she inquired if her Ladyship had lately heard any thing of the Earl, her father. Lord Felix, glad

of

of an opportunity to introduce any other subject than his wife, eagerly joined in the inquiry, saying that he had expected him for some time; when Lady Susan drawing herself up with great formality, said, "'Pon my honour, my dears, I beg your pardon, but the sight of my new daughter-in-law, quite put your father's message out of my head—he desired his love to you all, and will see you so soon as he is at leisure: in the mean time, I am to conduct you to the different habitations he has provided for your reception."

Lady Jane and her brother, equally at a loss to guess how the person whom they conceived to be so highly and justly offended, could be the bearer of this message, entreated her Ladyship would cease jesting, and seriously say, whether, she and their father were really friends? To which she replied by a shake of her head, and after a little pause, "Why, no, my dears,

dears, I cannot positively assert that we are friends; but we are husband and wife."

A long and loud laugh from Lady Felix, silenced the astonishment which the brother and sister would vainly have endeavoured to express; and having completely indulged herself, she proceeded to make her comments by saying, "Well, if that ar'n't a good one; so you took the old gentleman, when you could not get the young; but for my part, I think you was in a woundy hurry;—by Gosh, I would not have had him till I was quite certain I could not get any body else.—Why, he is terrible old, sure! I should be always taking him for my father, or grandfather—don't you, pray, my Lady? And don't you always feel frighten'd when you speak to him?—I know, I always did, 'thof he used to bow, and try to look good-natured—indeed, I think him terribly disagreeable; don't you, my Lady?"

Her

Her Ladyship smiled assent; and observed to Lord Felix, his wife, she had already discovered, had both taste and discernment. But he was too deeply engrossed with the recent discovery, to relish her compliment.

It needed not much penetration to perceive he had been the two-fold dupe of his father--first to relieve his pecuniary embarrassments by his marrying Miss Twaddle; and, secondly, to gratify his inclination for Lady Susan, by breaking the engagement between them. He felt he had been outwitted, and this was what he could not endure from any one; but least of all from his father. His vexation was too evident to escape the notice of those around him. Lady Susan enjoyed it: her pride had been wounded by the ease with which he had been prevailed on to resign her, and she gladly seized this opportunity of increasing his mortification.

To this end she said, "Cheer up, Edward,

ward, the old ones have been too much for you, to be sure; but you are not the only fool in the world, though, I grant you, to be the tool of two such noodles as your father and mine, is monstrously provoking; yet, as fretting will do you no manner of good, for, you know it cannot unmarry either your father or you, you may as well make the best of the matter, this time, and try to be not quite so easily gudgeoned the next. A "Damnation," groaned from between his Lordship's teeth, convinced her Ladyship that her speech had conveyed all the comfort she intended; she therefore contented herself with hoping he would in future have other counsellors than his father, who, though no Solomon, would certainly prove too much for his inexperience. She then led the way to her carriage, and conducted them, Lady Jane to Manchester, and Lord Felix to Portman-square.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THE astonishment of Lady Felix, who had never been in town before, and her odd manner of expressing it, infinitely amused the Countess, to whom it is now time we should give her proper title, as the wife of the Earl of Belmont; and at the same time, say a few words on the subject of her marriage, which had taken place a few days previous to our travellers commencing their journey.

At the time the Earl had agreed to the proposal which came from Lord Glendellan, of uniting Lord Felix and Lady Susan, he had never seen her Ladyship, nor was he exactly acquainted with the

ruinous

ruinous state of his own affairs. Mr. Twaddle had long been his agent, and always supplied him with money on demand. The Earl was not a man to seek after disagreeable truths, and had not the Alderman been the first to speak, it is thought his Lordship would have preserved a profound silence on all matters of business, except when his necessities impelled him to a different conduct. It is not, therefore, much to be wondered at, if Mr. Twaddle had some difficulty in finding him sufficiently at leisure to look into his accounts, which were, indeed, of a magnitude to deter a more persevering spirit of inquiry than the Earl felt; but as delicacy made no part in the character of his agent, importunity was not spared; and finding that not likely to succeed, a positive refusal of any pecuniary assistance was resorted to with better effect,

and

and a day was set apart for the investigation of his Lordship's circumstances.

This was a day he had long trembled at the thoughts of meeting, but it came loaded with horrors, of which he had not an idea; for it shewed him to himself, not only a bankrupt in fortune, but most entirely in the power of Mr. Twaddle, from some transactions not very honourable to his character, and which, the little care he had taken of his papers, had enabled that artful, prying man, to become master of; the Earl saw he was entangled in a net, which had been deliberately spread for him, and from which there was no escape; he therefore acknowledged the power, and threw himself upon the mercy of a being, he in his soul despised.

The Alderman informed him he was rich; but he was ambitious to be great, at least to make his children so, which might

might be accomplished by uniting their families. Depraved as his Lordship's mind had long been, his spirit revolted at so impudent a proposal; and he felt more inclined to chastise the proposer, than agree with the proposal. A moment's reflection, however, convinced him the season for pride was past, and the hour of humiliation fast approaching: it remained with himself to make that humiliation tolerable, by closing with his agent's views, and adorning the degradation of his family by the glitter of wealth; yet it was with difficulty he stifled the indignant feelings of his heart, while he lamented the obstacle which presented itself to the proposed union between Lord Felix and Miss Twaddle, from his engagement to Lord Glendellan; but to Lady Jane's alliance with the son, there was no such objection.

The truth was, her Ladyship's engagement to Mr. Fitzroy was not of his forming; and although he had given his consent to their marriage, it was not with any intention of adhering to it, if a more advantageous match presented itself.

This was now the case, for, in his daughter's connection with the man of her choice, no possible advantage could accrue to himself—he was the god of his own idolatry—and her happiness, or that of any individual, bore no consideration when placed in the scale opposite to his own. His contract for his son would have been held in equal estimation, had not some articles of it, on the side of Lord Glendellan, been already fulfilled. Thus situated, he hoped, although an enemy to reason himself, to meet with it in Mr. Twaddle; but he was mistaken in his man, for Mr. Twaddle was his Lordship's equal in cunning, and his superior in no good

good quality, except parental fondness, which was so evenly divided, that he would have refused any possible benefit for the one, which offered not as large a share for the other of his children. He, therefore, said, "I tell you, at once, Lord Belmont, it won't do; for, do you see, I loves my Biddy, as well as Joey—and can't give all that there money to get him a wife, and so have to go to market for a husband for her afterwards.—No; if so be you likes to take both, why, well and good; if not, why, there's no harm done—pay me my own, and I warrant I can find Lords enough, and to pick and choose."

The Earl, to whom this repulse was unexpected, felt greatly dismayed, and wholly at a loss how to proceed. He hesitated—spoke a few incoherent words—and hesitated again. At length, he said, "My good Mr. Twaddle, you mis-

conceive

conceive me, and impute that to me as a fault, which is really my misfortune. I have already told you, that my word is pledged to Lord Glendellan—I repeat that it is so, nor is it in my power to redeem it, without branding my name with dishonour. But I trust I have thought of a way to satisfy you, without injury to my character.—It is most certainly true, that Lord Felix cannot become your son-in-law, but I know of no impediment to the Earl of Belmont's having that happiness."

The Alderman's countenance underwent an immediate alteration; and the looks of determination and insolence, were exchanged for that of mirth and ridicule. After an ill-concealed laugh, he rather tittered than spoke:

"Beg pardon, my Lord—beg pardon;—don't mean to offend; but it sounded

so comical, to hear you talk of being my son, who are as old as myself—mayhap, a little older—won't dispute about that—I say, it sounded so comical, to hear you talk about being my Biddy's husband, that I could not help laughing, a bit; but no more would she, I am sure."

The Earl felt himself ridiculous, but had gone too far to recede; he, therefore, assumed all the ease he could, and said, "Oh! pray take your laugh out, my good friend, and when that is done, I will thank you to tell me what occasioned your mirth. If it was, that a man of forty should propose to marry a girl of nineteen, I shall be sorry; because, as I have a regard for you, I should wish you not, particularly as you are ambitious of being great, to betray so vast an ignorance of polite life. A nobleman's age, my good Sir, is never considered when

connecting

connecting himself with an inferior: a man of my rank, may marry a woman fifty years younger than himself!"

"And so, my Lord, may any man of no rank at all, if he can get her to have him: but more fool he, I say, more fool he. But this is not our business—you are not so bad as that; and if Biddy does not think you too old, its no affair of mine: so we are agreed."

A few words more settled the bargain, and they separated; the Earl, to do his possible in expediting the union of Lord Felix and Lady Susan, previous to the celebration of his own, or that of Lady Jane.

The completion of this business, he found, was likely to be retarded, by the dissipation and indifference of his son; for whose neglect he endeavoured to make all the amends in his power, by frequent visits, and marks of attention

to his mistress, which, from being acts of necessity, became occupations of delight; and the same pains were now employed, but with much greater success, to deter Lord Felix from seeing her at all, as had been before taken to drive him to her.

Lady Susan was young, beautiful, and vain: her heart would have led her to act right, had she ever consulted it: her temper was gay and volatile in the extreme; joined to this, there was a levity in her manner, which, although it really arose more from thoughtlessness, than any vicious inclination, often led her into conduct the most dangerous to herself, and ruinous to those whom she called her friends. Such a woman could not long remain blind to the little influence she had over him, whom her father had destined for her hubsand—she saw it, and her pride was hurt.

The

The profound admiration of the Earl, for admiration was her ruling passion, in some degree consoled her; at least, it led her to treat him with more attention than had been her custom. This he mistook for growing affection; and thrown off his guard, professed himself her adorer.

She would have treated him with all the ridicule she thought his presumption deserved, had not a hope of prolonging her amusement preserved him from its severity. To this end she replied to his protestations and entreaties so equivocally, as to lead him to conclude, the refusal she gave to exchange him for his son, only arose from the fear of offending her father; but his consent once obtained, her's would follow.

To this purpose he demanded a conference with Lord Glendellan, with whom he found small difficulty in accomplishing

ing his wishes. Fraught with this (as he conceived) happy intelligence, he was returning to throw himself at the feet of his goddess, when he would, probably, have been undeceived in a manner most obnoxious to his feelings, and wounding to his self-love, had not his visit been prevented by the meeting with an uncivil and importunate creditor, whose demands, at once large and urgent, were beyond both his power to comply with or evade. This it was which sent him home in such ill humour, on the eve of his departure for Blue-Bell Manor; and this it was which occasioned that hasty journey.

On his arrival, a short conversation with his agent, served to create the trifling alteration in his arrangement, which had now become necessary, of substituting his son instead of himself, an alteration which the Alderman highly approved, saying, "Aye, now, that's something

thing like—that won't be at all ridiculous; but I should like to know how you got rid of your promise to that Lord you were so much afraid of?" The Earl, having gained his point, wished to dismiss the business altogether, for the Alderman's comments were seldom very flattering; besides, no time was to be lost in completing the marriage of his son and daughter; in which, having seen him successful, if successful such a union could be termed, we will return to Lady Susan Trelawney, whose resentment at the conduct of Lord Felix, first gave birth in her mind to the idea of becoming the wife of his father.

It would be difficult to guess what passion she meant to gratify by so unpromising a step, but certain it is, not one of the party was more anxious for the immediate celebration of the nuptials, than her Ladyship, which had, as has

been related, taken place a few days, but not communicated to the inhabitants of Blue-Bell Manor. The Earl's silence arose from an awkward kind of conscious feel; that of his Countess, from a desire to witness the surprize which such information would produce; nor had she been disappointed, as the evident effect it had had on Lord Felix, at once flattered her vanity and gratified her desire to astonish. She had, indeed, been astonished in return; for, although she had been led to expect in Lady Felix an unpolished and inelegant woman, her ideas had not reached, by many degrees, in either person or manner, the object which had been presented to her.

All these circumstances combined, would have sent her back to her Lord in the best of all possible humours, had not the meeting with a party, which promised more amusement, taken her a different route,

route, and detained her, not until her desire to communicate the execution of the business she had undertaken, but his of listening to the detail had entirely subsided, and left in the place, anger, impatience, and disappointment. These were dispositions to which her Ladyship had been accustomed since her marriage, and to which she usually fixed no other attention than humming a tune, hurrying from home, or flying to bed.

For the first of these resources, the hour was not favourable; and for the last, in her present flow of good spirits, she felt no inclination; she, therefore, holding out her hand to him, said, in the tone of petition, and with a look which would have pacified a savage, "Forgive me this time, and I will never do so any more."

The Earl, who really loved her, and who had never before seen any thing like concession

concession from her, was mollified, if not subdued; he, half yielding, and half sullen, took the hand she offered, saying, "If you did but know, Lady Susan, the pain it gives me to say any thing that——"

Here she interrupted him with, "Then, positively, you shall not say one word, my dear old gentleman, for I have enough to talk about and amuse you with, until I am sleepy; so, come, sit down, and be agreeable, for I have a great deal to tell you."

Although not much delighted with the "*Dear old gentleman,*" he suffered her to lead him to a sopha, where, seating herself by him, she threw her beautiful arm around his neck, and reclined her cheek on his shoulder, looking up in his face. This was a situation so very new to him—so very unlike any thing he had ever seen in her before, that he would

have

have clasped her to his bosom with ecstacy, had not the sudden thought that she must have some point to gain, at once checked his fondness, and determined him to be on his guard against being wheedled, for so he termed every thing that was granted to solicitation.

Finding she did not speak, he told her, that he understood she had something to communicate. "And so I have," said she, raising her head with great quickness, "so I have;—but I was thinking just then——"

"Of what?" asked the Earl.

"Whether you or my father were the oldest, and which of you would live the longest; and I was thinking, if you died very soon—— Shall I tell you what I was thinking I would do?"

"No, nonsense!—Is this what you have to amuse me with?" asked his Lordship, rising hastily from his seat; but, catching

catching his arm, she drew him back, saying, "Well, I will not say a word more about your dying, but I will tell you all the rest, if you will promise to be good-humoured, and look pleasant and handsome—but you must promise before I begin."

"Well, I do promise," said the Earl, pettishly.

"Why, then," returned her Ladyship, "I have had a most enchanting evening. —You know, I was engaged to a dozen places, but I went first and foremost to Lady B——'s."

"I do not know," interrupted his Lordship, "how many places you were engaged to; but I recollect you did not come to the only one whereat you had appointed to meet me, which surprized me very much."

"Did that surprize you?—Oh, my dear old gentleman, then, how much

more

more shall I surprize you, when I make you understand, that I staid at her Ladyship's the whole evening, and could have staid there these seven years, it was so agreeable?"

"Pray, what was the attraction?"

"I will tell you that, too:—My late admirer Sir Harry was there—we renewed our acquaintance—I had not seen him since his marriage—so, I offered my congratulations, and we had a fine laugh about his wife."

"Was that decorous, Lady Belmont?"

"Why, my dear Lord, she is much older than he is; and if old folks will be such fools as to marry young people, they must be content to be laughed at, for it will be their fate.—But, you don't look pleased, my Lord; —you have broken your promise, and I have a vast mind not to tell you, that Sir Harry protested he never, in the whole course of his life, had

seen

seen me look half so lovely as that moment; nay, he vowed I was more than human, perfectly angelic, and positively irresistible?"

"And could you listen to such common-place nonsense, Lady Belmont? and did you not blush for yourself?"

"I did listen, my Lord; nor do I remember that I blushed."

"Then I do for you."

"Thank your Lordship—I dare say your blushing will do quite as well, and be far less trouble to me: so now I have given you all my amusing anecdotes, I shall proceed to relate my adjustment of the business on which you employed me, and which I hope will afford you equal satisfaction.

"On going to the hotel, as you desired, I found Lady Jane, Lord Felix, and Lady Felix. The first is dying, her heart is broken—the sight of her would have

given

given me the horrors for the whole evening, had not the churn-shape, odd face, and vulgar manners of your daughter-in-law diverted my attention from every thing but herself, and made me laugh so immoderately."

"Indeed! you were very polite—I hope she did not see, or at least did not know, at whom you laughed?"

"Yes, she did; but she was even with me; for shortly after, when I told them I was married to your Lordship, I feared she would have burst her fat sides with the violence of her mirth. I could not for my life help joining her, and I declare it never had struck me as half so ridiculous before; yet on your son it had a quite contrary effect, he grew sulky, frowned, bit his lip, and when I rallied him for being outwitted by you, he cried, 'Damnation!' and seemed to threaten somebody. I don't know whether it was the

thoughts

thoughts he had in his head which altered his countenance, but I never conceived him to be half so handsome before; it was very strange, but he looked quite beautiful, and I felt as if I should like just such a man for my husband, or my lover, or—my any thing. But it is very late—I will go to bed, and I hope you will allow that I have been agreeable to-night?"

"Yes, very agreeable."

"And have talked enough?"

"Oh! quite sufficient."

"And to the purpose?"

"Most exceedingly."

"Well, then, since I have made your Lordship happy, I will go to rest contented;" and off she skipped.

"So shall not I," muttered the Earl, as the door closed after her. "My daughter's heart broke—my son threatening—and my wife renewing her acquaintance

with

with a favoured lover: admirable subjects for content." He mused a moment, then cursing reflection, hurried to a sleepless bed, from which he arose languid and uneasy. The form of Sir Harry Faulkner, was perpetually intruding itself upon his recollection; his fine person, elegant manners, and dissipated character, were so many daggers to his bosom. Nor did the thought of meeting his son and daughter at all contribute to tranquillize it; not that he repented him of the evil he had done to them, but he dreaded, from their discontent, that some might possibly accrue to himself.

In this temper he attended his Lady's summons to breakfast. Her good spirits seemed to have rather increased than diminished, by rest; she was lively, and talkative—spoke much of the pleasure of the preceding evening—and concluded by

by saying, she had made an engagement for the opera.

The Earl contented himself, at present, with coolly saying, he was sorry for it, as he must disappoint her, being particularly engaged.

With a voice of surprize, she inquired, "Who is engaged?"

"I am," answered his Lordship.

"And how does that concern me, my Lord?"

"No otherways than by detaining you at home, as you cannot go without me."

Her Ladyship laughed.

"I am glad to see you treat it so lightly—I feared you might have felt some degree of disappointment."

"Not the smallest," returned Lady Belmont, affecting to misconceive him; "your company would certainly be an addition to the party; but as I should be astonished,

nished, were you to make any engagement for me, without first obtaining my consent, so I should deem it presumption, were I to lay any claim to the disposal of your time. No, my dear Lord, we are both free agents, and, as such, I trust, shall consult our own inclinations —the only rule I know for securing happiness; and, as a proof that I do not preach what I do not practise, I feel a violent inclination to take an airing in the Park, and go this moment to put it in execution; so, adieu! dear old gentleman, adieu!" And before the Earl could recover the astonishment her speech had thrown him into, she was ascending her curricle.

Enraged, he threw up the window; and, in an angry voice, commanded her to stop. She smiled—kissed her hand —and drove off, leaving the poor Earl a prey to every tormenting passion.

He

He rang the bell for his groom—ordered his horses—and followed to the Park, where he rode back and forward for more than two hours; but in vain, her Ladyship did not appear.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

VEXED, and disappointed, he was turning towards home; but recollecting that he must see his son and daughter, sometime, he bent his course thither, muttering to himself the old adage, "What can't be cured, must be endured."

He found Lady Jane greatly altered—he dreaded her complaints; but on the subject of her sorrows, she was too delicate to speak to the author of them. His visit was short; and his manner and conversation constrained. Hence, he proceeded to his son's. Lady Felix, seeing him approaching, ran down stairs, and opened the door, to the amusement of

of two footmen, who were lounging in the hall.

She gave him a hearty shake by the hand, and told him he was come just in time to have a bit for lunch, as she had been waiting for Ned until she was almost starved. She then trotted up stairs, calling out,

"Only think, your Lordship, father, mother, nor Joey, ben't com'd yet."

The footmen with difficulty stifled a laugh—the Earl bit his lip, while she, desirous of making him welcome, employed herself in cutting him a tolerable substantial slice of bread and ham; then placing a bottle of porter between her knees, and fixing the screw in the cork, had it out in a trice.

One of the servants, who had preceded the Earl up stairs, and vainly attempted to make himself useful, now left the room, ejaculating, "A bar-maid, by the Lord!"

The

The Earl was confounded, he knew not how to act: he feared to engage in the Herculean task of attempting to polish her; yet to leave her as she was, was impossible—she would so expose herself, or rather him, for his Lordship never considered the disasters of others, but as they might eventually affect himself. In this undetermined state he stood—his arm extended—the huge slice of ham and bread, which she had forced into his hand, suspended between his finger and thumb, as though he feared to defile himself with the clumsy proof of hospitality. Fronting him stood her Ladyship, holding a glass of porter in one hand, and the bottle in the other, when Lord Felix and the Countess of Belmont entered the room.

For an instant they gazed in silence; but a violent laugh succeeded.

At length Edward exclaimed, "Finely grouped, upon my soul."

 "And

"And the attitudes," cried the Countess," Oh! that Cosway were here. No other could do justice to the manner."

"Such hospitality," said Edward:

"And such urbanity—such politeness," added her Ladyship. "Did your Lordship mark the Earl's extended arm, loaded as it was, while he withdrew the other, as much as to say, 'Until you eat, I will not drink?"

"Peace," said Edward; "it is the first time my father was ever known to do a liberal thing, and he blushes at detection."

The Earl endeavoured by one of his commanding looks to awe him into silence, but that time was past; the little influence he could ever boast over his son, was now destroyed. He saw he had been the dupe of his father's artifice, and he had vowed to be revenged; added to this, he was now independent of him.

The

The conversation was interrupted by Lady Felix pressing them all to sit down comfortably, and take a mouthful.

The Earl now turned to his Countess, saying, "I thought, Madam, when you so politely left me this morning, your inclination was leading you to the Park."

"You thought right, my Lord."

"Did I? Yet I am positive you have not been there this day."

"Right, again!"

"And will you permit me to ask why you were not, and where you have been?"

"I will permit you to ask any thing; and if convenient, I will answer; which being the case at present, I briefly say, to your Why, that my inclination changed before I reached the Park; now your Where, is another thing. But as I am in a sweet temper to-day, I will do mon Possible to make you the same; so, in good

truth, I have been half the town over. First, let me see, I went to Phillips's—then to Christie's—then to Lanchester's, Le Brun's, Brice's, Allen's, Hookham's."

"Stuff! stuff," cried the Earl; "what folly is this?"

"Do you not believe me?" said the Countess, assuming as erious look, "Upon my honour, it is a fact, nor is that half—I should have told you as many more, had you not stopped me; but my purse will gain me credit, I trust," offering the Earl an empty one. "You, I dare say, recollect, how well you filled it yesterday, and look at it now, every farthing gone, and not enough neither;—here, take it—pray, my Lord, take it, I never could endure the sight of an empty purse; come, that's a good soul, do take it, and make it fit to be seen going into the Countess of Belmont's pocket."

The Earl turned angrily from her—she followed,

followed, adding, "What, will you not take it, nor even speak to me? A pleasant evening I shall have, after putting off my party to the opera, to stay at home with you."

The Earl's countenance betrayed the rapture these words had occasioned—he looked at her with delight, and in a gentle voice, inquired, if it was really so.

"Yes, upon my honour."

"Then be assured I think it very kind."

He attempted to take her hand, but she gave him only the purse, which he pocketed with much good humour; and as soon as they reached home, returned it to her, amply replenished.

They dined tête à tête; she all life and spirits—he all tenderness, when a violent rap at the door broke in upon his Lordship's placidity.

"Who the devil is that?" he hastily exclaimed.

exclaimed. "My dear love, let us be denied, I will give orders;" and he was hurrying to do so, but she stopped him, saying, "it is impossible, my Lord; I did not think you would like to be alone with me all the evening, so I asked a friend or two just to make it agreeable."

"I am very sorry for it," said the Earl, throwing himself into a chair, while the Countess hastened to receive her guests.

The Earl sat brooding over his disappointment, until roused by the repeated thunders at the door, he bent his course to the drawing-room; in which he found about fifty fashionables of both sexes. He felt, that in spite of his resolves, he had been, what he most dreaded, wheedled by his wife. Stung with the thought, he cast his eye indignantly round in search of her, when to his utter confusion, he saw her seated at a distance from

the

the company, attentively listening to the earnest conversation of Sir Harry Faulkner.

He approached them with an angry countenance, and in a voice trembling with rage, said, "After the duplicity you have made use of, Lady Belmont, in bringing this company to my house, methinks you might spare them some small part of your attention."

She arose, with the utmost unconcern, and presented Sir Harry Faulkner. A surly movement of the head, on one side, and careless bend of the body, on the other, was the only notice taken by either; until the Countess observed to the Earl, she believed it was the first time he had the pleasure of being made known to Sir Harry; but, she hoped, now that the formal preliminaries were adjusted, they would speedily enter into a treaty of amity. He turned his face a different

way, and remained silent; which incivility the Baronet did not appear to understand; for he replied, that nothing could afford him greater pleasure—as, although he had, until that moment, been a stranger to the person of his Lordship, he could not help thinking him an *old* acquaintance, from the many times he had heard his father speak of him. He then added, "I believe, my Lord, you and my father were school-fellows; were you not?"

Here the Countess interrupted him, by saying, "Your father must be very old, now, Sir Harry?"

To which he replied, "He is, my Lady; nor does he bear his age, by any means, so well as the Earl; yet I think I have heard him say, he was the youngest of the two."

Not daring to give vent to his feelings, and unable to conceal them, if he remained

mained longer, the Earl walked towards a card-table; but he had not proceeded many steps, before an half-smothered titter from the Countess and her companion, so totally deranged him, that he determined to pass the night in an apartment separate from his Lady—a night, compared with which, the preceding had been enviable bliss. A thousand times he cursed the folly which tempted him to place his honour and peace in the keeping of so young—so beautiful—and, above all, so dissipated a woman; and a thousand times, he lamented, that he had not fulfilled his first engagement, and married Miss Twaddle. With her, he should have had nothing to dread, except the ridicule of the world, and *that* he could have, in a great measure defeated by hiding, in retirement, the cause of it; but, situated as he was now, no alternative was left him. To conceal Lady Belmont,

was impossible; he might as easily hide the sun at noon-day.—Like it, she would be for ever roaming from place to place; and, like it, her influence would be felt, and worshipped, in every change, while he was left exposed to the shafts of malice; nor could any conduct he should mark out for himself, avail him; for if, watchful of her fame, he attended her steps into those scenes of dangerous amusement, which, he saw, she was determined to frequent, could he endure the sneers which would meet him at every turn?—Could he endure to be received with coldness—and pointed at, as the jealous husband, or the suspicious duenna? Oh! no; by Heavens, he would sooner see her the most public of all the daughters of folly. What, then, if he pursued a different path, and avoided every place which she frequented, would this preserve him from being an unwel-

come visitor, and from the epithets of jealous, or suspicious? Yes, it undoubtedly must. But, then, might not those of credulous, and dotard, supply their place? Nay, might not the charge of convenient dupe, or wilful blindness, be his fate? Yes, yes—and not an alternative was left him, unless he exerted the authority of a husband, and compelled her to be obedient to his will—and on this he resolved; and with these resolves, big in his mind, he entered the breakfast-room, not a little priding himself on the step he had already taken to shew his resentment, by having left her to her own meditations during the night.

His triumph was of short duration, for her Ladyship's waiting woman met him with a message from the Countess, desiring he would not wait breakfast, as it was uncertain at what hour she should return.

"Return!"

"Return!" exclaimed the Earl.—"Whence—when—and with whom did she go out?"

The woman replied, her Lady had been gone some hours; with whom, or to what place, she was ignorant.

He paced the room like one distracted; and, now, he cursed the folly which had tempted him to leave her the power of executing her abominable projects; until spent with exercise and vexation, he threw himself on a sopha, in a state of stupified anguish.

He was arouzed from his lethargy, by the entrance of the Countess herself. She was in high good-humour—her fine face lighted up with smiles, and tinged with a glow, derived from morning air and exercise, met his view, and, for a moment, disarmed his rage. She hastened to him, saying, "What a good soul you are, to have waited so long! But, come,

for

for I have brought home the appetite of a milk-maid," and instantly seated herself at the breakfast-table.

Softened by the sweetness of her voice and countenance, he found it impossible to resist the invitation; and rose, uncertain, whether it might not be prudent to defer his lecture for the present. This goodly disposition was of short duration, for one glance at her person rekindled the half-smothered embers of passion, and occasioned them to blaze with added fury. The beautiful symmetry of her thinly-covered limbs—the ivory whiteness of her artfully displayed bosom—and the captivating negligence of her whole appearance, were all as many stimuli to his jealous tortures.

Half choked with his feelings, he rudely inquired where she had been, and how she dared to go out without his knowledge? She raised her eyes to his, but

but continued to sip her coffee. The servant was about to quit the room, which, perceiving, she bade him stay, as his Lord and her had no secrets.

The Earl repeated his demand with increased warmth.

She calmly said, "Eat your muffin, my Lord—you must be hungry;" then added, "I will thank your Lordship to take my coach this morning, and lend me your chariot, if it will not inconvenience you."

Her easy manner confounded him.—He arose and paced the room. At length, having ordered the servant to withdraw, he approached her with a stern and angry look. She met it with a stedfast eye, and before he could speak, holding out her hand to him, asked, "Are you not well, my Lord?—You look sadly."

Again he was disarmed, and in a softened tone, replied, "No, Lady Belmont,

mont, I am not well—I shall never more know the blessing of peace or health."

With a pitying manner she said, "Lord bless me, I am very sorry—how long has your disorder been so bad?—Does your physician know of it?"

"Lady Belmont," returned the Earl, "you mistake me; I have not any disorder, but that of the mind."

She shook her head significantly.

"Your conduct overwhelms me with anguish; if pursued, I have every thing to dread from its impropriety—my peace will be wrecked—and my honour will not be safe in your keeping."

Finding she remained silent, he conceived her to be convinced; and gaining courage from her supposed dismay, he continued:

"Your renewing your intimacy with Sir Harry Faulkner was indelicate—your inviting him to my house was indecorous

—your

—your going out this morning was indecent—and, to be *short*, the whole of your conduct is indefensible."

"At the last sentence, she arose hastily; saying, "Does your Lordship call it short?—Upon my honour, I think it quite the contrary; and shall hope to make you comprehend, in fewer words, that your petulance is extreme—my patience expended—and that such paternal pathetics are unpalatable to me—so, bon jour." And, with a smile and a courtesy, she was tripping away; but, seizing her arm, he detained, and compelled her to re-seat herself, desiring that she would dismiss her pleasantry, and listen to the resolves by which he meant, in future, to be guided, in respect to her.

A slight motion of her head indicated that she was attending; he then ran over all his causes of complaint, real and imaginary, not omitting her dress; and pointing

ing particularly to it at that moment, he said, "Let me ask you, Lady Belmont—is this thin drapery, which scarcely veils any part of your person, proper for my wife?" Then, leading her before a glass, he added, "Do but behold that unclad form—that exposed bosom; are they such as ought to be expected from the Countess of Belmont?"

"Certainly not," gravely replied her Ladyship. "Certainly not, my Lord; a more matronly appearance would become her better; I see clearly it is ridiculous; why, the wife of your son could not make a more youthful exhibition.—Yes, it is foolish—but whether the folly rests on me, or your Lordship, requires no very able casuist to determine."

"I have done!" said the Earl, with vehemence; "you are irreclaimable, and I take my leave."

"Not so fast, my Lord," she gaily returned;

turned; "a word with you before you go. I have listened, with much temper, to a long catalogue of my own frailties, to no one of which have I pleaded not guilty; yet, although I may stand convicted of each positive crime, may I not have something to offer in my defence, which, though it should leave me a criminal in the eye of the law, may recommend me to the mercy of the jury? By way of instance, I stand accused of dressing unbecoming the wife of Lord Belmont; to this I plead guilty; but, before sentence is passed, I begged to be heard by counsel, in arrest of judgment, or in mitigation of my sentence, and thus he acquits himself:

" Gentlemen of the jury, I will not wrong your judgments so far as to suppose, after the confession which you have heard the defendant plead, that any thing which I may say, would lead you to acquit

acquit my unfortunate client of the crime of which she certainly stands convicted; neither shall I intrude longer upon your time, than will suffice to state some circumstances which, though insufficient to prove her innocent, may yet be found, not only to lessen the horror of her guilt, but to hold her up to you as a fit object for mercy. That the Earl of Belmont's wife should appear a discreet matronly person, both in her manners and apparel, is admitted. That the criminal at your bar has widely deviated from those rules, has been but too clearly established; and Heaven forbid I should stand here as an advocate for such a breach of moral duty, since the venerable Earl of Belmont's wife should be venerable too. But then, gentlemen of the jury, she should be really so; 'tis not the 'inky cloak, or customary suit of solemn black, denotes her truly;' she must not seem to be,

be, but be what she seems; and here my client is invulnerable. She is young, gay, and beautiful; she dresses, or rather, undresses her person, according to the fashion of those of her age—she is dissipated, according to the fashion of those of her age—she is extravagant, according to the fashion of those of her age. Her Lord is morose, discontented, and jealous, according to the fashion of those of his age, at which she laughs, according to the fashion of those of her age; and where, gentlemen of the jury, lies the wonder of all this? I own I cannot discover. Let us, for a moment, suppose, the unnatural union of lovely heart-warming June, with cold repelling January. Which among you would wish or expect her to resign her smiles and graces, or to veil them in a cloud? Would you be content to lose her beams, because her torpid companion could not come abroad?

Would

Would you not rather welcome her with tenfold ardour, and endeavour to detain her from her frigid, ill-suited mate? I see your smiles, and I anticipate for my client, a verdict, in which justice shall be tempered with mercy.

"The jury, without retiring, give in their verdict guilty, with one shilling damages. The court is dismissed—the whole town rings with the affair;—I go into public—crowds attend my steps—I hear from every tongue, 'How beautiful!—What an angel!—Oh, she is too lovely!' I blush, and look embarrassed—to relieve me, they retire—the belles envying June—the beaux laughing at January."

Here she paused for a moment; then shaking her husband gently by the arm, she continued, "Why, old gentleman, you seem petrified;—what is the matter?—Has my eloquence confounded you?"

"It has, indeed," said the Earl; "most completely."

"What

"What a pity," resumed the Countess, "that my inauspicious stars doomed me to be the wife of an Earl!"

He raised his eyes to her face with a look of reproach.

"I mean," she went on, "that you had not been a commoner; in which case, you might have bought a seat in parliament, and I could have composed you some sublime speeches, by the passing of which for your own, you might acquire fame; nay, who can tell, if in time you might not have been stiled, the 'Heaven-born minister,' or 'the man of the people?' But, in the House of Lords, sublime speeches can be of no utility; yet, I do recollect, the divorce bill is coming on.—Ah, my dear Lord, I have a vast mind to qualify you to speak on that subject."

"I do believe you, Lady Belmont."

"Well, that is kind of you—but I must teach you to speak with feeling."

"Your

"Your Ladyship will do more—you will teach me feelingly to speak.—I have already learned enough for the first lesson —you will therefore have the goodness to go to your apartment, and remain there until I feel disposed to take a second,"

"Agreed," said her Ladyship; "but don't be long, for I am to meet a friend at three, who will furnish me with some admirable hints."

He waved his hand for her to go.—She walked to the door; when, turning, she nodded to him, saying, "Good by t'ye, old gentleman;" then, repeating sarcastically "the belles envying June—the beaux laughing at January," shut it after her and retired, leaving her Lord at liberty to reflect on the happiness he had secured to himself by the possession of a young and beautiful wife.

He shuddered at the contemplation—every feeling of his soul was in arms—his

his love, his pride, were deeply wounded. The ridicule with which she treated him, sat heavy on his spirits. Her hate, he thought he could have borne; but her contempt was intolerable. She seemed to set him at defiance, but he would make her feel his power; as the first step to which, he would instantly confine her to her own apartments; and he rose to execute this intention, when he was met by her woman, who came to say, that her Lady had forgot to tell his Lordship of her having engaged Lord Felix, and Lady Jane, with their new connections, to meet his Lordship's maiden aunts at dinner, on that day; and that, in order to break the family party, and make it more agreeable, she had likewise invited her own father, and some other friends.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

HERE was a most effectual stop put to the execution of his plan for that day: nor was this all; as few things could be more unpleasant to the Earl than the society of the Twaddle family, but the thought of making them known to his connections was intolerable; and, to add to these perplexities, strangers were invited—and her Ladyship's father, too. What was to be done? In vain did he ruminate—bite his lips—and smite his forehead:—no alternative presented itself. That his Lady had contrived this purposely to torment him, he could not doubt; and that the execution would be

such as would most promote the end proposed, he was equally certain.—How, then, should he best defeat her malice? After much deliberation, he resolved to appear pleased with her arrangement, and feign to feel grateful for her attention to his gratification.

Delighted with his expedient, which he was convinced would, at least, make her a partaker in his mortification, he was going in quest of her Ladyship, when he was again prevented by the entrance of a servant, with a note from Sir Harry Faulkner.

"From Sir Harry Faulkner?" repeated the Earl.

The servant said, it did not require an answer, and left the room; while his master seated himself, laying the note on a table beside him. He mused for a moment; then said, "What can he write to me for? Is it a challenge? (and he turned it

it round with a scrutinizing eye, as though he expected the outside might give him some intimation of what it contained within.) I know of no other possible business he can have; and yet I cannot tell why he should wish to fight with me, unless it is for making me the object of his ridicule, and that in my own house, too. Well, if he chooses to shoot me, I must give him an opportunity, whether agreeable to myself, or not. Damnation! Into what perplexity has my folly led me! —I must be in love."

He snatched the note, and tearing it open, read:—

"Sir Harry Faulkner is exceedingly "mortified, that an indispensable engage-"ment prevents him the honour of "thanking the Earl of Belmont, in per-"son, for his obliging invitation to din-"ner, which he accepts; and will, with "great pleasure, attend him at six."

 The

The Earl readily recognized the genius of his Lady in this second exploit; and asked himself, where her persecutions were to end. At this instant, the recollection of his departed wife, for the first time, crossed his imagination; her mild virtues, and patient suffering, made a formidable contrast with the unyielding, volatile spirit of his present partner. A something, resembling compunction, made his heart throb—it was a sensation he had never before known: he felt disposed to inquire whence it arose, and whither it tended? That heart, which had so long been silent, now told him he was a villain, and would be a wretch; and that what he had deemed the summit of happiness, was only the precursor of irremeable evil.

To fly from himself, and the care-worn image of his first wife, he hurried to the apartments of his second. In vain he

he looked into each room—they were deserted. He rang the bell, and was informed, her Ladyship had gone out in a hack chair, and unattended.

His rage was now at its acme, for he doubted not but that Sir Harry Faulkner's indispensable engagement was with her. He imprecated curses on her—on Sir Harry, and himself, until the entrance of his gentleman, to know if he would be pleased to dress, drew his attention to the hour; when he found he had but a very short time to allay the tumult in his mind, before he should be called upon to perform a part, which would require all his coolness and collection.

Some time before he was in readiness, and long before he wished them, part of the guests arrived, of which he was informed by the Countess herself; who, putting her smiling face within the door, said, "Why, you dear, old, fidgety man, are

are you not equipt yet?—Your company wait for you. You old gentlemen take so much making up—do they not, Mr. Thompson?"

The servant smiled, and bowed. She shut the door, singing,—

"And auld Robin Gray was gude man to me."

On the Earl's entering the drawing-room, he found the ladies, Gertrude, and Olivia Felix, Lord Glendellan, with several other males and females. He perceived, in the formal looks of his aunts, that the want of nobility in his late connections, had damped the ardour they would have otherwise felt, in the prospect of being made known to them; and he blessed his stars, that the obscurity of their origin was such, as might defy that babbler, fame, to divulge, further than was to be gathered from the coarseness of their manners; and to soften this as much

much as possible, he took an opportunity, in such language as he thought the best calculated to meet their romantic notions, of desiring these ladies, not to expect to find in their new relatives, town-bred people, or people famous for compliments, or French manners, but open, generous Britons; who, ignorant of the vice and folly of fashion, had passed their lives in druidical purity, and in practising the nearly obsolete virtue of ancient English hospitality.

Lady Gertrude said, she had read of a famous family of Twoddles, somewhere, in the time of Harry the Fourth—and desired to know if these were descendants of theirs.

The Earl replied, he did not know—he rather thought not, as this gentleman's name was Twaddle—not Twoddle.

Lady Olivia remarked, she had heard much of the wealth of these Twaddles;

 and

and added, "Pray, are they so very rich?"

"Yes, madam," returned the Earl, "immensely rich."

"I much wonder," said her Ladyship, "they have not contrived to purchase a title, in these days of degenerate nobility?"

The Earl was vexed to observe, how little effect his flourish of druidical purity, and ancient English hospitality, had produced; and replied, with some warmth, "There needs not any contrivance, Lady Olivia;—Mr. Twaddle can purchase half the titles, and the whole of your noblemen, any day he thinks proper."

"Not the whole!" returned her Ladyship, sarcastically. "Some, I cannot deny, there are, who are to be both bought and sold, Lord Belmont, and great is their shame; yet, if they would only sell themselves, it might be pardoned."

The

The entrance of Lord and Lady Felix, with Mrs. Twaddle, now engaged the attention of the company. The former no sooner saw his aunts, than he led his wife to them, presenting her in great form, as Lady Felix, of Blue-Bell Manor. They started, and looked with astonishment at each other; then coldly complimented her on her marriage, by which time his Lordship had handed up Mrs. Twaddle, saying, "And this, Ladies, is my mama."

At this moment the Alderman, who had followed his son-in-law's chariot in a hackney coach, making his appearance, Edward seized his arm, and dragged him to the same spot, adding, "And this my papa; and now you are acquainted, I will leave you together."

The introduction was totally unheeded by the old gentleman, who was busily employed in counting and examining

some shillings in his hand. At last he broke out in this soliloquy :—

" Ods-bobs! if the rascal has not given me a Brummy at last—yes, its bad.—Oh! its damn'd bad. Wife, look, ar'n't this a bad one?"

This summons was gladly obeyed by Mrs. Twaddle, who had been oppressed by the contemptuous silence of the ladies Gertrude and Olivia, who had not deigned to bestow a second glance on her; she now engaged herself in rubbing the shilling, which after narrowly inspecting, she returned with a sigh, and, " Why, love, it ar'n't worth a twopenny bit."

Lady Felix had joined her parents, and was indulging in a hearty laugh at their distress, declaring they made as much fuss about a paltry shilling, as if they had not got another in the world; for her part, she wondered how they could be such fools."

The

The mother said mournfully, "Well, well! it can't be helped now, sure enough," and followed Lady Belmont, who was urging her to be seated; while the Alderman espying the Earl, who had been an agonized witness of what had passed, called out—

"'Fore Gad! I have made a bad day's work of it, my Lord; here have I paid two shillings for a coach to bring me here, because your son said the ladies must not be squeezed; and to mend the matter, the rascal of a coachman has given me a Brummy in change. I hope, your Lordship's dinner will be a good one, for I have paid pretty dear for it."

Mrs. Twaddle disapproving of this speech, bawled out, "Lawk! husband, if I bean't ashamed of you. I am sartin you can't be an hungered; for you had a snack before you came from home—so had I too, for that matter. These here Lunnun

Lunnun late hours takes away the stomachs of us country folks."

The entrance of Lady Jane and her husband, Mr. Twaddle, checked the mirth of the company. Lady Jane approached the aunts, who advanced to meet her, uttering some very inarticulate congratulations upon her marriage. She courtesied, and would have spoken, but tears bursting from her eyes, she pressed her hand upon her forehead, and hurried to a seat.

The Countess, whose heart, when not occupied by any favourite pursuit, participated in the sufferings of others, followed her friend, placing herself so as to screen her from the view of the company; and conversing with her until she had recovered the shock of meeting her relations.

Sir Harry Faulkner was announced. While he was paying his compliments to the Countess, a rather smart slap on the shoulder

shoulder occasioned his turning round, when the Alderman holding out his hand, exclaimed, "Gad! so Ise right enough —'tis him—give us your hand, my boy!"

Sir Harry, for a second, stared in his face, and then cried out: "What! little Isaac! In the name of all that is wonderful, where do you come from, and how came you here? I am very glad to see you—upon my soul I am."

"I dare be sworn, you are; and it is not the first time, Sir Harry—(here he winked significantly) but that is all over, now, that you have got a rich wife. Ah! she was just the thing you wanted —a sweet woman, she was quite a plumb—rather a little too ripe or so, to be sure; but yet, though the fruit of autumn, it was in devilish good season for you."

Here, he laughed heartily at his own conceit; and Sir Harry found himself greeted

greeted by another acquaintance in the person of Mr. Joseph Twaddle, whom he saluted with "What! my friend Joey, too; well, my lad, how goes on the law? Are you as famous now for wrangling as formerly? If so, you must make a special attorney. Tell me, have you set all the county by the ears?"

"Ah!" said the Alderman, "he did not stick to that any more than to any thing else—there was all that money thrown away."

"Never mind," returned the Baronet, "I will stake my life that you repaid yourself, old Usury, out of the first needy dog that came into your clutches."

Here Mrs. Twaddle approached to pay her compliments—her hands placed before her in such a manner as to admit of her favourite employment of twirling her thumbs, from which she seldom ceased, unless they could be more usefully employed;

ployed: placing herself directly opposite her old acquaintance, and dropping a low and solemn courtesy, said, "I hope, Sir Harry, your honour is well?"

"The better for seeing you, Mrs. Twaddle. How do you do, my good Lady? How is your rheumatism? Where is my friend Biddy? Does she play at blind-man's buff, and make black puddings as well as usual? How goes on your piggery? Have you succeeded in the black breed you were so anxious about? So Joey, is not an attorney at last?"

This was all uttered in a breath; probably in the hope that some part might be forgotten in the reply; if so, however, he was mistaken, and ought, during a residence of four months, in which he was compelled to hide from his creditors under the Alderman's roof, to have learned more justly to appreciate the memory of his hostess; particularly when any thing

like

like kindness or civility, mingled with the items of any speech addressed to her.

Beginning with his first inquiry, she said in her mild, drawling manner, "Thank your honour, purely; as to my roomatiss, I hopes to have no more of it; being as how I have got a charm, which they says do wonders.—You will be s'priz'd to find your friend Biddy is in this here room; and thof she doesn't play at blind-man's buff, or make black puddings now, because, as one may say, she be's above it, its my belief, she likes them as well as ever. As to my dumb creatures your honour is so kind to ax a'ter," here she courtesyed to shew her particular gratitude; "they be dooing very well, and I beats all the county in the black sort. Poor souls! I longs to see them again. As your honour says, Joey is no attorney, a'ter all; he had always a snikkering to be a gentleman, and his father has indulged

dulged him—I hopes good will come of it."

The Baronet had listened to this reply with as much patience and politeness, as though it had been a commendation of his own person from the lips of beauty. Finding she had completely answered all his questions, he took her hand, requesting she would accompany him to his friend Biddy, with whom he wished to renew his acquaintance. Here the Alderman interfered, saying, "If it was Biddy Twaddle he wanted, she was not here." The old lady told her conductor not to mind Muster Twaddle, for he was as funny as ever; thof, to be sure, it was true enough Biddy Twaddle could not be there: being as how she had changed her name.

"So, so!" returned the Baronet; "she is married then?"

Mrs. Twaddle assented; adding, "For that matter, so was Joey too."

"And

"And pray," inquired Sir Harry, "How am I to address Biddy?—What is her name?"

"Why," answered the good woman, "I declare if I ar'n't amost ashamed to tell your honour, because I thinks its almost too much; but she is called Your Ladyship, and Lady Felix: being as how, she is the wife of Lord Felix."

The idea of the romping, vulgar, untaught, Biddy Twaddle, being Lady Felix, was more than his risible faculties could withstand, and an immoderate fit of laughter was the consequence; nor was it until after several efforts, that he could articulate, "Very well, upon my word!—and Joey; who has he married?"

The old lady, abashed by the reception of her first communication, felt half ashamed to hazard the second. She at last ventured to say, "Why, its a kind of a family agreement, as one may say;

so

so Joey married Lord Felix's sister, Lady Jane."

The Baronet's countenance, which still testified how much he was diverted with Biddy's honours, now underwent a total transformation, and gave testimony, as completely as his tongue could have done, of the shock he had received; but having now reached the object of their pursuit, he attempted to say something civil and gallant to his old acquaintance, in which he had succeeded very awkwardly; for having, in his approach, met the vacant look and pale visage of the melancholy Jane, he could not withdraw his eyes; nor did he, though addressing his words to Lady Felix, observe her well-grown hand, from which she had drawn her glove, held out to him, till he felt it, indeed, heartily shaken, and heard, "What a time you have been gossiping with mother!—I thought the old lady meant to tie you to her apron-string, and

never let me get a bit of chat with you."

Sir Harry, still contemplating the faded face of the luckless Lady Jane, stammered out, "She was extremely good, and assured her, he was amazingly happy to see her, and to see her look so well." One of her not very elegant laughs was now to be heard, somewhat more distinctly than his compliments had been, and was followed by this nearly as elegant reply:

"Vastly well, indeed; but how did you find it out? For I'll be sworn you ha'n't seen me these three years, unless you have eyes in the back of your head; you've been looking at sister, Lady Jane, this half hour—its my belief, you are a mind to cut out Joey."

The mention of her name, roused her Ladyship's attention; she languidly raised her eyes—they met the intent gaze of Sir Harry—a faint suffusion spread her face—it was momentary, and she again retired into herself, appearing to be wholly ab-

sorbed

sorbed in her own desponding thoughts.

The summons to dinner, in some measure, relieved the Earl, who thought any change must be for the better; yet, he was not much happier when seated at his own table, the object of contempt, or, at least, indifference, to the most of those who surrounded him. The whole family of the Twaddles had his decided hate; to them, therefore, he never directed a willing look, while the freezing formality, and pursed-up mouths of his aunts, were objects little less desirable; nor did the sneering impertinence of his son invite his attention; yet, any of these were preferable to meeting the tender glances, which were perpetually passing between the Countess and Sir Harry. If, in his endeavours to avoid these, his eyes fell on his hapless daughter, her resemblance, in her present depressed state, to her dying, heart-broken mother, made him shudder. He had not even the advantage

tage of most other bad men, that of flying to wine for refuge; for, amongst his numerous vices, this had never found a place. Wine he detested, and could not have resorted to it, even had he been secure of its procuring him tranquillity. On the whole, the meal passed off heavily enough.

On the ladies retiring, the Alderman proposed, to be a little jolly now that the women were gone, in which he was seconded by Lord Felix, who certainly did not possess the single virtue of his father, never being averse to making free with the bottle; and Lord Glendellan was too old a courtier ever to refuse his vote on that side, which promised a majority. Thus situated, the Earl was compelled to keep his ground, and swallowed bumper after bumper; nor did the absence of Sir Harry, who had stolen away soon after the ladies, serve to harmonize his mind.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

IN this state we will leave him, while we take a peep at the Ladies, who were not much more sociably disposed. The spinsters having separated themselves from the rest of the company, for the purpose of lamenting over the indelible blot their genealogical tree had met with, when they gave vent to their feelings in the following dialogue; commencing, as did every thing between these formal personages, according to seniority:—

"Lady Olivia, I request your sentiments of the dishonour which, to future ages, must dim the, till now, unsullied lustre of our noble birth?"

 "Indeed,

"Indeed, Lady Gertrude, I have not power to express them—I am petrified. Could I give utterance to my words, I would tell you, that I wished the Earl of Belmont, and his race, had perished, ere we had seen this day; but I cannot—indeed, I cannot speak: so your Ladyship must judge of my sentiments by your own."

"I do, Lady Olivia—I do judge of them by my own; and, I trust, we shall go hand in hand through this business; for I am determined to renounce the whole plebeian crew, and to shut them out, with equal diligence, from my door—my eyes—and my thoughts. No Jews—no little Isaacs—no synagogue usurers, shall contaminate the board where our dignified ancestors have fed."

"No, Lady Gertrude!—no breeders of swine—no f bricators of black-puddings—or defiler of parchments, shall hold converse

converse with the daughters of the eighteenth generation of the illustrious Cadwallader Christopherus Felix—first Earl of Belmont."

Thus did they proceed to relieve their mortified bosoms, in which they were not likely to meet interruption, as Lady Felix, and her mother, were busily employed in discussing the demerits of the dinner, of which no two present had a better right to form a judgment, if quantity be admitted as the criterion to decide on quality. Most unequivocally, did they pronounce, that all the dishes with which they were acquainted, were spoiled in the cooking—and that those of which they knew nothing, must be sad stuff.

Sir Harry and the Countess, composed a third tête à téte; but as they seemed not to wish their conversation to be overheard, we think our readers would con-

 demn

demn our officiousness, were we to attempt to divulge it; we will, therefore, only say, we do not think either *family honour*, or the *art of cooking*, occupied their attention. We will leave these couples, engaged to their mutual satisfaction, while we take a view of the forlorn Lady Jane, who had placed herself at the harpsichord, and turned the leaves of a music-book, without knowing that she did so; then, touching the keys, her fingers mechanically struck the notes of a song, composed on the death of a sister, by the man who possessed every wish of her soul. The sounds were mournful, and her heart beat responsive. Leaning on the instrument, her hand supporting her aching head, she gave the reins to her ideas, which, in a moment, bore her to the regions of despair.—Shut up in her own wretchedness, she was insensible to what passed around.

In

In this situation, she was observed by the Ladies Gertrude and Olivia, who had been for some time deliberating on the propriety of admitting even her Ladyship, after her unpardonable dereliction from nobility, to their immaculate society. The sight of her sorrow at once reconciled them—the heavy tears, which fell upon the book, gave proof that she was already punished for her offence; and, as punishment had been their only aim, they were satisfied; and determining to accost her in the character of consoling angels, instead of accusing spirits, advanced towards her, but were prevented from executing their humane intentions, by the presence of the Countess and Sir Harry, whose attention she had recently engaged.

The only cure for sorrow, in the Countess's opinion, was to forget the cause; and the best method of effecting this, was

was to think of pleasanter things, which having always found a very easy matter in her own affairs, she could not imagine it could be extremely difficult in those of another. Possessed of this idea, she addressed her friend, saying, "My dear Jane, I have been making an engagement for you, to-morrow, to the Haymarket—it is the most delightful opera—and all the world will be there."

Her Ladyship raised her eyes, and slowly shaking her head, resumed her position; while the Countess burst into a laugh, calling out, "Bring the drawn dagger, or the poisoned bowl.—Why, my sweet tragedy-queen, what part are you studying, now? For that Siddonian shake must mean something: but descend from your altitudes for the present, and thank me for my attention to your pleasures."

"I do

"I do most gratefully thank you," replied her friend; "but——"

"But me no buts," returned the lively Countess; "I am your mama—and you will scarcely dispute parental authority; therefore, hold yourself in readiness, as I shall call on you before nine." Then turning to the aunts, she continued: "Ladies, I am sorry to be obliged to practise these severities before you; but this poor child has been left so long to her own management, that, I am afraid, I shall have some trouble, before I make her as perfect as we could wish her. Yet I do not despair of hearing her hail the day I first took upon me the superintendance of her conduct; for she has lately acquired, as your Ladyships must perceive, some uncommon bad habits."

They agreed, that their relation would do well to profit by the good spirits of her friend—and recommended her agree-

ing to the proposed arrangement for to-morrow. Lady Jane, smiling through her tears, at the assumed consequence of her young mother-in-law, bowed her assent to that lady's repeated commands, of being ready at the hour appointed. This she did, more from a disinclination to contest the matter, than any desire to be of the party.

The arrival of the gentlemen from the eating-room, gave a turn to the conversation; and the saying, "In vino veritas," was here exemplified; for each appeared in his proper character. Lord Glendellan was no longer the supple courtier, obsequiously bowing, and of every person's opinion, but stately and splenetic; never speaking but to contradict, or make some sarcastic remarks, tending to display his own importance, or the littleness of his companions.—Lord Felix, silly, and full of monkey tricks.—

The

The Alderman, mighty funny; dealing out vulgar witticisms, and indecent innuendoes;—whilst the Earl of Belmont, without the aid of wine, also appeared as he really was—mortified—humbled—and unhappy.

The Alderman, not recollecting his introduction to the aunts, insisted on the Earl's performing that ceremony, which was reluctantly complied with on his part; when, hugging Lady Gertrude round the neck with one hand, and thrusting up her chin with the other, he said, "We must have a buss, for new acquaintance sake;" and, actually, and in despite of all her efforts, kissed her noble lips several times.

Lady Olivia, eager to escape the same defilement, had flown to the door, where she stood debating, whether to fly from the monster, as she termed him, or to the rescue of her sister. Before she could

 decide

decide on so momentous an affair, the necessity for decision had ceased, by the Alderman releasing his victim, and receiving, for his really civil intentions, a violent slap on the cheek, which, aided by the champaign he had drank, occasioned him, after staggering back some paces, to take rather a sudden seat upon the floor; where, though his head had escaped prostration, the honours of it had not, for his cauliflower wig lay at some distance. The incensed descendant of Cadwallader Christopherus, having recovered her breath, called out, "Is there no man of honour present, to defend me from the insults of that Caliban?"

The old gentleman, either unable, or unwilling to resign his seat, stared wildly around him; asking, "What the devil does the old witch mean?—Curse me, if I did not think I was doing the civil thing by her!—Who would have thought the old

old weasel had so much strength?—Ned, give us a lift."

Lord Felix, who had been a delighted spectator of the whole scene, advanced to his assistance, saying, "Yes, my adventurous knight, most readily, for thou art the prince of heroes—inasmuch as thou hast stormed a fortress, hitherto deemed impregnable."

"Tell me, old boy, how do the lips of a virgin taste? For, upon my soul, if there is such a being in the world, I think the Lady Gertrude is one:—she is of the last century, and that accounts for it.—But you do not tell me how the lips of the virgin taste."

"Very bad," said the discomfited Alderman; "I would sooner have had a smack from my own old girl."

Lady Olivia now ventured to approach her contaminated sister, with the joyful

intelligence, that their carriage was announced.

On her rising to go, the embarrassed Earl offered his hand to conduct her, which was rejected with scorn; while Sir Harry, who had at the same time presented his, was graciously received, with an entreaty to lead her, with all possible expedition, from that scene of druidical purity, and ancient English hospitality. Then, with the politeness of former times, taking leave of the mistress of the house, she left the room, while the Alderman, staggering from his seat, mimicked the adieus, by grotesque courtesies, and mumbling over the words she had used, finished with "Halloo! rusty, fusty, old Tabitha Runt, give my love to your sister cats."

A loud laugh from his daughter, with a slap on the shoulder, accompanied with,

"Well

"Well done, old boy," from Lord Felix, sent him to his chair in great good humour; where, however, a sound sleep put an end to his sprightly sallies for that evening.

The Earl no longer able to smother his disgust, desired Mrs. Twaddle to take that man away. This broke up the company, and left him with his Lady at liberty to discuss the agrèmens the day had produced; which like most of their tête-à-tête partie, terminated in a quarrel.

The following evening dragged the unwilling Lady Jane to the opera. The house was crowded, and every eye was turned towards her. Curiosity was now added to the universal admiration which had ever attended her appearance. Her desertion of a favoured lover, and extraordinary marriage, furnished the subject of conversation to all around her. But that, and their fixed gaze, were equally unobserved

served by the suffering object of their attention—all her faculties were absorbed in the terror of seeing the injured Fitzroy. After some time, she cast her eyes fearfully around the brilliant circle, and she felt revived by discovering that he was not present. The music now caught her attention, and for a while beguiled her of her sorrows: she felt herself happier than she had expected, and was easily persuaded to accept an engagement for the ensuing evening. This produced others; and in the endeavour to fly from herself, she became involved in a round of dissipation.

The thought of returning to her ill-mated partner, the dread of whose brutal violence of temper, could only be surpassed by her horror of his fondness, were the only painful reflections she suffered to intrude, and she became, with every virtue to adorn domestic life, the very

slave

slave of fashion: gay without mirth—coquetish without vanity—and extravagant without enjoyment—she gamed without avarice—encouraged lovers without passion—and propagated scandal without malice. She was courted by fools, pitied by men of sense, and either envied or despised by her own sex.

Her husband had been too deeply engaged in accompanying his mother and sister to all the fine sights of Lunnun, such as St. Paul's—the Tower—the wild beasts at Exeter 'Change—the wax-work, and many other places of equal notoriety, to bestow much observation upon her Ladyship's conduct; not that he had solicited this act of dutiful attention, but his father had declared he would not, and Lord Felix, that he could not, be their escort. The former said, Joey should go; and the latter, more artful, spoke so highly of the wonders he would behold, and the positive

positive necessity for every man of fashion's being made acquainted with the lions, that he accepted the office, and went through it with as much grace as was in his nature to do any thing which obliged more than himself. But every shew had been seen, and agreeable as his companions were to have gone over the same ground, with equal or increased avidity, he positively refused his attendance, declaring it would afford him no amusement; so they might go by themselves.

During the time of his having been thus engaged, although the whole of every day had been spent abroad, and he had returned home only to go to bed, it never once occurred to him that Lady Jane might be alone; or, that being alone might be disagreeable to her. But now the case was widely different; he was at home, and she was abroad—a circumstance

stance so extraordinary, that he deemed it unpardonable, and, in consequence, received the affrighted offender with such brutal fury, menacing her with punishment, if a similar case occurred, and ordering her instantly to quit his presence, that she retired, overcome with horror, terror, and disgust.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

THE following morning brought the indefatigable Countess to propose a delightful scheme for the ensuing evening. She found her friend's eyes swollen with weeping--her bosom torn with anguish. She listened to her detail in silent astonishment, and remained in profound thought for some time after she had ceased to speak. At length, she said, "Dear Jane, this is no common case, and therefore requires some dexterity in the management. This wretch, to whom your delectable father has sold you, is a brute; and would think no more of executing his threats, than he would of shooting

shooting a rabbit.—Heart he has none; his ideas are as mean as his birth; to deal, therefore, with him, as if he were a gentleman, would be fruitless and absurd. He has always been accustomed to traffic —to give so much of his commodity for so much of your's, and we must indulge him.—Yes, Cerberus shall have a sop—we must barter such a measure of our countenance and attention for a certain portion of his good-humour; we must give him amusement, that he may leave us to amuse ourselves. To be sure, he is a complete Bruin; yet, I do not despair of finding some time-worn, or forsaken damsel, to take him off your hands."

Here they were interrupted by the subject himself, of her Ladyship's deliberation. His lowering brow and fiery eye convinced her she had not any time to lose; and she had rightly discerned; for he had sought his fair relation, to tell

her, that if she ever kept his wife so late again, he would turn her out of his house.

Without giving him time to speak, she said, that she had just left a message for him with Lady Jane, but was better pleased to deliver it herself, as she was determined not to be refused the pleasure of his company to the assembly of a friend of her's that evening, where all the fashion of the town would be, and that he must positively go, or the party would be incomplete. Had a painter taken his face as it was, the moment before, and at this instant, he could not have persuaded credulity itself to believe, that the same person had sat for the two portraits; Indeed, the change was so rapid, and so great, as to wear more the appearance of a convulsion, than any natural operation of the muscles. He bowed and smiled—and stammered and hesitated—and began again, to the infinite

nite amusement of the Countess, who, elated with having succeeded so far, resolved to pursue her good fortune. To this end, she took leave; but, turning at the door, inquired of Lady Jane, if she was still obstinately bent on becoming the laugh of the town, by moping at home? Then addressing Mr. Twaddle with, "Do, my dear Sir, prevent that good soul from rendering you and herself ridiculous; for in this case, as in most others, the innocent will suffer with the guilty. For once, lay your commands upon her to attend you. I know you dislike the thought of being seen in the same party; but, indeed, for once in a way, it will not be so very extraordinary. Besides, you need not appear to have any knowledge of each other, which will be more tonish than even being in separate parties.

"It was but the beginning of the last season,

season, that his Grace of R——, and his Duchess, were at Lady Blunder's route, placed at the same casino-table, where they appeared such perfect strangers, that on his Grace's leaving the table, one of the two gentlemen who had been their adversaries, inquired of her, if she knew the name of the person she had played with; to which she replied in the negative; but added, that she had some idea he was an emigre. This was deemed the quintessence of fashion; insomuch, that it became quite the rage to be a stranger to your husband through the remainder of the winter, and a most pleasant fashion many of my friends assured me it was. But I am chattering here of fashions, when I have a thousand places to go to; therefore, adieu, my dear Mr. Twaddle; you will not forget you are my Cicisbeo for the evening; and so, make Lady Dismallo oblige me with her company."

"She

"She shall, Lady Belmont; I will insist upon her going; and you may depend upon me."

He then handed her Ladyship to her carriage, and thought the hours tediously long, until the appointed one arrived. For the first time, his Lady was of the same opinion, and they descended with equal alacrity, on the glad tidings of Lady Belmont's being at the door.

As this was the first entrèe of Mr. Joseph Twaddle into high life, the dinner at the Earl's being too much a family party to afford much room for the display of the haut tôn, he had prepared all his best airs for the occasion, such as he had practised at a country assembly, to the annoyance of the modest and peaceably disposed, and which he termed, "Astonishing the natives." Full of himself, and the feats he meant to perform, he kept close to Lady Belmont, bearing in mind

mind the appearing not to have any knowledge of his wife.

Though somewhat astonished at the number of laced and powdered attendants, he got through them very well, and entered the first of the suite of rooms with a swaggering gait, and something like a look of defiance; but the view which met his eye of three magnificent apartments, brilliantly, as he termed them, illuminated, and filled with a numerous company, splendidly dressed, so totally deranged him, as, in one instant, to deprive him of all recollection of the part he had intended to play off. He stood aghast, until his conductress had a second time repeated his name to the mistress of the fête, who had thrice courtesied, and asked, with the most fascinating smile, the usual question of, "What game he played?" To which he replied, "Perfectly well; I am very much obliged to

you?

your Ladyship, I hope your Ladyship is the same?"

During this àprôpôs speech, he had advanced so near the Lady it was addressed to, that in making his profound bow, he deranged one of her feathers, and their foreheads coming in contact, no small portion of the powder which had occupied his well whitened head, now remained on the beautiful dark locks of her grace. He would have made a long string of apologies, had the Lady remained to hear them; but this she had no inclination to do, nor did she give him the opportunity she saw he earnestly sought for, of coming near enough for that purpose during the evening.

Refreshments were now offered, which he seemed well inclined to take, but did not know how to dispose of his hat, and was looking carefully around for a place to deposit it, which was observed by a

 servant

servant out of livery, who approached and held out his hand to take it, but Mr. Twaddle mistaking him for the master of the house come to bid him welcome, instead of giving him the hat, dropped it on the floor, and seizing the servant's hand, shook it cordially with several bows and inquiries after his health, to the infinite amusement of the man, who could not entirely restrain his laughter. In stooping to regain his hat, he stumbled backwards on the knees of an old lady, who protested with much good-humour, though with tears in her eyes, 'that, on her knees she entreated him to fall no more, as she should long retain a feeling sense of his backslidings.' To which another, by whose dress he had caught in his fall, looking at the rent which he had made, said in a piteous voice, 'Alas! I see no hope of amendment.' As both the ladies were titled, their wit was deemed excellent,

excellent, and was followed by applauses proportioned to their rank.

In spite of his self-love, Mr. Twaddle began to perceive, he was, though a very fashionable man, not yet a man of fashion; and he determined to get into a corner, that he might at once be out of people's way, and have an opportunity of making his observations. This, after some time, and much difficulty, he accomplished, having ran down several trays of refreshments in his route. He remarked, from his situation, the perfect ease and good-humour which prevailed amongst the males, and wondered why he could not feel and act the same: he saw them laugh, and talk, and bow, and, what was still better, take refreshments without waiting to hang up their hats.

After a little time, he persuaded himself that it was all very easy, and taking

for his pattern a gentleman who was passing with a dignified step, with his hat under his arm, he placed his accordingly, and sallied forth with a gait so stately as to border on solemnity. As he observed the attention of several gentlemen was directed to him, he concluded that all was as it should be, and proceeded with much self-applause, until two dashing young men passing him, smothering a laugh, said one to the other:—

"In the name of all the saints, who have we got here: Beau Nash, or Sir Cloudesly Shovel?"

"He looks stately enough for either of those gentlemen," replied his companion; "he is certainly a genius, or a queer one. Curse me, if I don't think it is Townsend, the Bow-street hero; you know, he attends at all mobs; and only observe how fast he holds his hat, whilst he keeps all

snug

snug in his coat pocket with the other hand :—that is, my tight lad—safe bind, safe find."

"Egad!" returned the first, "If it is Townsend, he is up to a thing or two."

As he was ignorant who was meant by Townsend, he was at a loss to conjecture whether he had been complimented or affronted. Of Beau Nash he was equally ignorant; but, from the appellation of beau, concluded he must be something dashing. With Sir Cloudesly Shovel, he was rather better acquainted, having some recollection of seeing him, though he could not call to mind where, or when it was. One consolation he had, that from his title, he must be a man of rank. The remark upon his hat, and his having his hand in his pocket, he feared meant quizzing, and he was the more convinced of this, from noticing several of the company passing him

him at that moment, with their hats dangling at their sides, suspended or held between the thumb and fore-finger; nor could he discover one soul who carried his disengaged hand in his coat pocket.

He had no sooner ascertained his errors, than he sat about rectifying them. Happy would it have it been for him, if he had always been as clear-sighted to his defects, or as diligent in repairing them. I could sport a few fine moral sentiments on this subject, did I not fear to incur the censure of my fair readers, at least, who would ask with some shew of justice, whoever thought of morality or sentiment amongst people of fashion? I shall reserve my pathos for a more suitable occasion, and conduct to the inner room, my pupil in the manners of tonish life.

After several attempts to regain the unfortunate hat, which would, in spite of pinching, slip from between the finger

and thumb, particularly, if his arm, which was several times the case, forgetful of the decorum required from it, would indulge itself with its usual swing, and as at these times, it would not fall exactly at his side, he had, more than once, several paces to walk before he regained it. The novelty of this, joined to the awkward appearance of the young man, produced many inquiries and conjectures concerning him. Amongst the latter, several pronounced him mad, but more believed him intoxicated. He, however, did, at last, reach the place where he hoped to find the Countess; for he began to think there was not much fun in being in a croud, without having any person to speak to.

At the entrance, several gentlemen were conversing on the uncommon beauty of a lady present; one of whom declared, he envied her husband; to which another

 replied,

replied, he was in no wise singular in that, he believed; although, for his part, he thought there was no man who stood a better chance of deserving pity; when a third exclaimed, "Who the devil would pity him?—Why, he is some low fellow, and a fool into the bargain.—Can he expect that beautiful, that angelic creature—"

All this time, Twaddle had been raising himself on his toes, trying to get a peep at her they spoke of; but not being able to determine which lady it was, he interrupted the last speaker with saying, "Pray, Sir, which is this famous beauty?—I long very much to see her."

The gentleman moving a little, said, carelessly, "You may satisfy your longing, then, for she is coming this way."

"Who, that?" exclaimed Twaddle; "why, that's my wife!" and he darted towards her, leaving the whole group in consternation. While "Is it possible?—

Heavens!

Heavens!—What a sacrifice—monstrous—and unaccountable," burst indignantly from their lips. "Why," cries one, "this is the fellow that has been playing at foot-ball with his hat."—"And shaking hands with one of the servants," adds a second.

In this way they were proceeding, when they were joined by the Earl of Belmont; and it occurring to one of those gentlemen, that a good opportunity offered of roasting his Lordship, determined not to lose it; he, therefore, under the pretence of ignorance as to the person, began detailing what he stiled the various manœuvres of a suspicious, odd-looking fellow, who, he thought, must be a fool.

The Earl felt very indignant that such company should be admitted amongst people of fashion—expressed his opinion, that he was more knave than fool—and said, the company ought to be cautioned

to have some care of their valuables. At this instant, Twaddle, who had been seen by Lady Jane, just in time to avoid him, and who had in vain searched for her through the croud, got sight of her father, and being really rejoiced to find a face he knew, made up to him with all possible expedition, to the great inconvenience of those who happened to obstruct his passage; the Earl had been led to recognize him by hearing him pointed out as the author of the exploits already told, by the same gentleman who had rehearsed them.

The knowledge of his approach was sufficient to make his Lordship change his ground, which Twaddle perceiving, called out, "Halloo!—Father-in-law—Lord Belmont—I want to tell you something."

The Earl, finding to escape was impossible, returned, saying, with the utmost complaisance

complaisance he could assume, "Mr. Twaddle, is it you?—I did not know you had been here.—Who is your party?—Are you going to join them?"

"I can as soon join the devil; for I know just as well where to find him. Your Countess brought me here, to be her beau, she said; but it was all my eye, for she and my wife beau'd off, the minute after we came in.—I have not seen them but once since, and then they vanished like ghosts. How damned hot this place is—let's go and get something to drink."

The Earl was confounded—he wished the whole family of the Twaddles lodged in the bottom of the Black Sea—he was fearful either of inviting or discouraging his familiarity—almost equally dreading his resentment or good humour, for he had learned sufficient of his temper to know he was not to be offended with im-

punity—and intimacy with Twaddle, degenerated into vulgarity; adopting, therefore, a middle conduct, a stately kind of good breeding, he suffered himself to be led back to the room of entrance.

Here they were stopped by her Grace of ———, who complimented the Earl on the extreme beauty of his daughter, who, she said, ought to be shut up on some desolate island, now that she was married, or she would deprive the beaux of the little stock of wits they possessed.

Twaddle, who had never bestowed a thought upon any thing but the title of his wife, now began to be vain of her beauty, and felt some regret that fashion prevented his being seen with her. To remedy this as much as possible, he determined, as he found the Earl said nothing, to tell people himself, that she was his wife; and fearing lest her Grace might leave them, before a fair opportunity

tunity presented itself, he interrupted her in the midst of a marvellous story, which with great earnestness she was narrating, by saying, "I shall make a point of telling *my* wife, Ma'am, all you have said of her."

Her Grace looked surprised.

"Your wife, Sir!—What can I have said? Have I the honour of knowing her?"

"Oh! yes, Ma'am—Lady Jane Felix is my wife."

The Duchess looked at him in silence.

The Earl grumbled out, "My son-in-law, Mr. Twaddle."

Her Grace stiffly bowed; and measuring, first the son, then the father, with a look strongly expressive of disgust and contempt, passed on.

As the Earl saw no probability of a release from his companion, he proposed returning home; to which Twaddle made

no

no objection, the amusement not being at all to his taste. He could get neither ale nor porter to drink, nor did he see the smallest hopes of, "Kicking up a row." Even stumbling on the gouty feet of old gentlemen — quizzing old ladies — or treading on the trains of young ones, seemed no part of the entertainment; and as to frightening the latter by staring in their faces, he would as soon attempt to storm a citadel, defended by red-hot shot; they were so much more au fàit at that business than himself. They returned to their homes in very different tempers; the Earl incensed at his Countess, for introducing Twaddle, in opposition to his declared wish, of keeping him, as much as possible, in the back ground; and still more so in leaving him to expose himself; while her Ladyship, he did not doubt, had retired with her favourite, Sir Harry. On the other hand,

Twaddle

Twaddle pleased himself with the thought of returning to his handsome wife, of whom he resolved to be very fond in future. They neither of them, however, had an opportunity of displaying their respective humours that night, as it was morning before the ladies returned.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

THE business of the presentation, which the Earl could no longer find any pretence for deferring, was at last fixed to take place on the following day; when, accompanied by his son, the senior and junior Twaddles, he attended the levèe.

It had been with the utmost difficulty he had prevailed on the Alderman to delay his purposed request of the commissaryship, on which he had set his heart, to a more favourable opportunity; nor was he without fear, that it would even now take place, as the old gentleman muttered several times on his way to St. James's, that he hated your shilly-shally doings;

doings: he was for striking while the iron was hot. But he kept his word so far, as the not asking for the place; though he disregarded some additional advice, respecting his observing a strict silence, unless in reply to his sovereign; for, after heartily shaking his Majesty's hand, he begged him to command his services on every occasion, as he should never begrudge money or trouble to oblige him.

The appearance, words, and manners of the man, too exactly corresponded, to raise any other than ridiculous ideas; and it was with some difficulty the King himself restrained his risibility; and such was his benignity, that he did not, for a time, withdraw his hand from the Alderman's grasp; nor was it until after several intimations from the Earl, that he relinquished his hold, with another hearty shake, when he followed his mortified conductor,

conductor, who preserved a sullen silence, in spite of the questions and remarks of his delighted companions. Indeed, his Lordship's mind was too fully occupied with the scene of that morning, and in anticipating the agreeables which, in all probability, attend that of the drawing-room, where the vulgarity of Lady Felix would, he had no doubt, render her eminently conspicuous. He was strongly tempted to contrive delay, until the recollection that he should only detain the old people longer in town, induced him to alter his intentions; and determined him, like a man in a desperate disease, to swallow the nauseous draught as soon as possible.

Accordingly, on the appointed morning, he presented himself at Lord Felix's, where it had been fixed the whole party should assemble. His Countess and Lady Jane were already there. The beauty and

and elegance of their appearance gratified his vanity; that of Lord Felix was equally pleasing; but the encumbered, over-dressed, and naturally inelegant figure of Lady Felix, where silk and gauze, silver and foil, with flowers, feathers, beads, and ribbands, seemed to have conspired to render her ridiculous, occasioned an involuntary start, with the exclamation of, "Preposterous!—monstrous!—what folly!—what profusion!"

Her father, adverting to no other part of what had been uttered than the word profusion, concluded extravagance was meant, replied, "'Fore Gad, you might have well said so if you had paid for it;—it cost a fine penny, sure enough; but if I don't grumble—why, I don't see what business you have with it. I never desire to know what you do with your money; though, perhaps, I might not, in that case, be troubling myself with other people's concerns."

The

The Earl stifled the indignation he dared not give vent to; and, leading the way to his carriage, bade his Countess to follow.

On their entering the drawing-room, they attracted every eye. The late scene at the levèe was recollected, and the Alderman was shortly surrounded by all the right honourable lovers of quiz of the circle, to his and their infinite amusement, insomuch that he had nearly forgot his errand; but suddenly recollecting himself, he said, "Gad so, I had like to have made a fine kettle of fish of it—I have not yet taken any notice of the Queen;—the Earl of Belmont tells me I must not speak a word; so, I'll go and have a smack at her Queenship's hand, and return in a twinkling."

He was just in time to see his daughter receive the congratulation on her marriage, followed by the hope she had found the

the town air agree with her. She thanked her Majesty kindly—said she was purely well, thof she did not like Lunnun a bit, nor any thing she had yet seed since she had comed into it. Her Majesty smiled at the compliment, and Lady Felix would have passed on after the Countess, according to the instructions she had received, had not her feet got so completely entangled in her train, as to render it impossible to proceed; she floundered for some time, and would have stooped to extricate herself, had not the encumbrance of her immense hoop rendered it a service of danger. In this dilemma, she looked round; and seeing her father, called out, "For goodness sake, father, do come here! my legs are got fast in my gownd."

With his assistance they were released, and her Ladyship joined in the mirth she had occasioned, by one of her hearty laughs. The

The ceremony was no sooner conclud-ed, than the Earl and his Countess with-drew, and were followed by their party, all of whom, except himself and young Twaddle, were in high good humour. That of the Countess and Lady Jane, had been occasioned by the universal ho-mage they had received; whilst Lady Fe-lix, ignorant even of the meaning of the terms elegance and good-breeding, con-ceived them to consist in being well dressed; to be well dressed, she ima-gined, was to have fine clothes, and she saw no person present half so fine as her-self; of course, she concluded, the par-ticular attention with which she had been observed, proceeded from admiration. This placed her perfectly at her ease; not that timidity was at any time amongst her failings; she had often heard her father say, he could buy half the Lords in the kingdom; that he was a richer, therefore,

a greater

a greater man than any of them; the truth of which she implicitly believed; which, combined with the ignorance of her own defects, or the superior qualities professed by others, enabled her to address her Majesty with as much unconcern, and nearly the same familiarity she would have used to one of her mother's customers, for either pigs or physic.

The enjoyment of Lord Felix had arisen from the extreme vexation and mortification he had seen his father endure. The Alderman was always happy when he could get any person to listen to his boasts of wealth, or laugh at his witticisms. In both of these respects, his audience of this day had been particularly agreeable; in truth, they had been exceedingly amused by the oddity of his remarks, and still more so with the vulgar familiarity of his manners to several noblemen, who had done him the honour

to

to run largely in his debt. He was no way fastidious; a laugh, in his opinion, was a laugh; whether with him, or at him, was the same thing—they were merry, and he was delighted.

His son was by no means so easily pleased; his temper, naturally morose, had been rendered worse by indulgence.

In his native village, he had been the king of his company; in his father's house, the tyrant of his family; in the fashionable world he was a cypher—a nothing—unless vulgarity of appearance, insolence of manners, or brutality of temper, brought him into notice. Of this, he was in some degree sensible.—He had discernment sufficient to perceive, in the circles to which he had hitherto been introduced, that he was only sneered at by the men, and overlooked by the women.

These were mortifications which the arrogance of his disposition could ill

brook;

brook; and the resentment they occasioned him to feel, rendered him still less likely to cultivate the esteem, or engage the attention of those by whom he wished to be thought of consequence.

The Countess, with her usual vigilance, contrived some excuse for one of the carriages being out of the way, and for Lord Felix, Lady Jane, and herself, to return together, leaving, the Earl with the three people, whom on earth he disliked the most. Hastily taking his seat, he sat ruminating on the scene just passed; but neither the Alderman nor his daughter felt at all inclined to copy his taciturn humour; the latter protesting she had never seed so poor a place to go a visiting to, where there wasn't a bit of nothing to eat, nor a drop to save one from choaking;—for her part, she was fit to gnaw her finger ends off. As she seemed to address this to the Earl, he disdainfully asked what she had expect-

ed. Her father, too, inquired, "What, Bidd, didst expect a good lunch, with a draught of home-brewed?" To which he added a laugh, which her Ladyship knew to be one of what she termed his jeerings, she therefore replied, rather angrily.

"Lawk, father, I bean't quite so ignorant to expect the queen to give ale of a morning;—no, I looked for something a little more eleganter than that—some sweet-meats or bluemonge, or summut of that sort."

"No, no, Bidd," returned the Alderman; "you great folk have nothing to give away, unless you call fine low bows or simpering courtesies any thing. By the time you have been a great Lady one twelvemonth, you will discover what poor devils you all are.—How should it be otherways?—They have no sense to keep a guinea when they have got it. What a parcel of silly fellows have I been speak-

ing

ing to this day!—not one of them seemed to understand a word I said, when I talked about turning the penny, or sending my hundreds to bring home thousands; but when I talked of some people sending thousands, to bring back nothing at all, they were up to me, every Lord of them."

The Earl had now reached his house, and gladly escaped from his companions.

The Countess and Lady Jane had passed some months in a continual whirl of dissipation, alike heedless of the censures of the world, or the remonstrances of their relations. The former, failing in all her attempts to engage any of her female acquaintance to take young Twaddle off their hands, had had recourse to one of her male friends, who, being the ardent lover of Lady Jane, readily lent his services to find employment for her husband, by introducing him to a set of honour-

able gentlemen, members of a noted club, who found means to occupy, not only the whole of his time, but his attention, insomuch that he never thought of her Ladyship but when he saw her, and that was too seldom to give either party much uneasiness, when a masked ball was announced, to which all the fashionable world were bidden, and to which Lady Jane, who had never yet been present, at what (she supposed) must constitute the acme of human happiness, looked forward with the most unabating ardour. Neither was she the only person who eagerly anticipated the delights that night was expected to bring with it. Lord Morpeth, the friend who had provided so pleasantly for her husband, had hailed it as the lucky moment of his fate with her Ladyship.

They (the Countess and Sir Harry Faulkner) were at the scene of festivity

at

at an early hour. For some time they kept together; but at length, the Countess, taking Sir Harry to look at something which had engaged her attention, was prevented by the crowd from re-joining her friend. Lord Morpeth seized the opportunity of pressing his suit, which was for some time answered with raillery, and then with gentle remonstrance, until affected by his distress, and overcome by his intreaties, she consented to receive his visits in the absence of Mr. Twaddle; and as there was very little probability of re-joining the Countess, she was easily prevailed on to suffer him to attend her home. For this purpose, they were quitting the apartments; when, stopping in an outer room, until his Lordship's carriage drew up, a young man, near them, was accosted by another, who asked him if he had seen the Knight of the rueful countenance; to which the other

other replied, "Yes; you mean that poor devil, Fitzroy; there he stands, wrapt in 'green and yellow melancholy, mourning over the frailty of his Dulcinea."

"And," said a third, who joined them, "see where that Dulcinea stands, "like Helen in the night when Troy was sack'd, spectatress of the ruin she had made."

This drew the attention of the party to Lady Jane, by whom it was, however, unnoticed, her's being fixed on the pale, languid face of Fitzroy, who, melancholy and alone, leaned against a chimney-piece, so totally absorbed in his own reflections, as to be insensible to what was passing round him: while the mingled passions of surprize, love, pride, and pity, rent the bosom of his unfortunate mistress.

She felt that her limbs would not support

port her, and she hurried to a seat; which the gentlemen observing, one of them exclaimed, pointing to Fitzroy, "Take any form but that, and my firm nerves shall never tremble."

A loud laugh, and the cry of "Encore—bravo!" from his companions, spoke their applause, and, at the same moment, roused both the lovers to a sense of the ridicule they were exciting. They met.—He started at sight of her—she made an involuntary stop, as if intending to address him—he put on his mask, and hurried past her. She could not mistake the eagerness with which he avoided her; resentment urged her departure, but a more uncontroulable passion bade her remain. After some hesitation, she confessed her reluctance to quitting the place, and her wish to return to the company, in the hope, as she said, of finding the Countess. To this arrangement, her

companion, who had marked the extreme agitation of her Ladyship, from the instant Fitzroy's name had been pronounced, at first objected; but, after making several fruitless efforts to induce her to fulfil her first intention, he led her back to the saloon, where, instead of avoiding his dreaded rival, he placed her within a small distance of the corner, at which he stood.

Here his Lordship threw off the air of respectful timidity, which he had hitherto worn; and, assumed that of the familiar, fearless lover, frequently addressed her Ladyship in whispers; then seemed to wait as for her answers and smiles, as though he had been delighted with them. All this the agonized Fitzroy had noticed, and concluded, as one far less interested, would have done, that Lady Jane was not more faithful to the husband she had chosen, than to the lover she had rejected.

jected. Yet, could he have seen her face, for she had been purposely placed with her back to him, he would have seen that her eye was fixed on vacancy, and her whole thoughts so entirely confined to her own oppressed bosom, as to render her alike insensible to the attentions of his Lordship, and to the noise and folly which surrounded her.

Her torpid appearance (for she had remained unmasked) had engaged the regards of even strangers. This the miserable Fitzroy imputed to the indelicacy of her situation; and unable longer to endure his own, he retired. The Countess, soon after re-joined her friend, at whose earnest solicitation she accompanied her home, nor did they separate until a full communication of the events of the evening had taken place. It required far less discernment than the Countess possessed, to understand the state of Lady

Jane's heart; she saw that the sight of her lover had fanned the half extinguished embers of affection into a flame, which, she feared, would destroy the small portion of happiness that she had hitherto enjoyed. She felt for this new cause of sorrow, and ardently wished she had the power to divert it.

In the mean time, the object of her meditations retired to bed, not in the hope of rest, for that she knew was impossible, but to give vent to the anguish which preyed upon her heart; but even here she was debarred that privilege of the wretched, for her husband, who had returned home, in a most savage temper, as had lately been his custom, loaded her with abuse, and her father, with every opprobrious epithet, which disrespectful malice could invent; all of which was endured in silence, the hapless sufferer being fearful that any attempt at justify-

ing

ing herself might provoke him to greater violence, and still more apprehensive of seeking to appease his wrath, lest it should end in fondness, more dreaded by her than his most direful hate. Writhing with anguish, she looked forward to the moment when her brutal partner's exhausted passions should sink into repose: a blessing which, she felt, was far removed from herself.

Her sensations at the sight of her lover had too well convinced her of the state of her heart—that heart, whose murmurings had hitherto been stifled by dissipation, and the raillery of her friend, now became too impetuous to be controlled: it forced upon her imagination two pictures.

The first presented a life spent with Fitzroy—the object of each other's fond regard, and happy in themselves, they unite their endeavours to pluck the thorn from the bosom of the less fortunate, while he,

content

content with her humble merits, and grateful for her affection, conducts her through the paths of life—her guide—her protector—her friend—the partner of her joys—the soother of her sorrows. With pride, she beholds him the master of her fate—certain of his worth, she submits to his power—satisfied with his applause, she seeks no other praise—their days pass bright and unclouded—their nights peaceful and refreshing. Thus they descend into the vale of life together—loved by their friends, and respected by their dependents.

Fain would she have dwelt upon this blissful view, but the delicate tints faded as she gazed; and, vanishing, left in their stead a contrast, whose harsh lines, and strong colouring, proved it to be an original:—the former, only a shadow. She would have turned from it with horror, but she tried in vain—it still was placed before

before her. In every part, the image of her husband was the prominent figure.—His countenance was terrible—he seemed to pronounce, misery or death.

Alarmed, lest she should disturb her brutal mate, she sought to compose her wearied mind; and, at length, sleep came to her relief. It restored the former of the pictures perfect in every part, except that she was still the wife of Twaddle; the respect of the world was forfeited—she was the companion of Fitzroy, yet she was happy.

She awoke; and unwilling to part with the short-lived joy, she retraced her dream; "And why," she asked, "cannot it be realized? Fitzroy is the idol of my heart—my faith was given to him—his peace depends on mine—his claim is prior to the man who has, indeed, by law, possession of my person. But who made this law? Can he who framed the bond,

bond, make me its willing subject?—Can laws restore my peace?—Are there any powerful enough to disunite my heart from the object of its earliest choice, and give it to the man my soul abhors? Oh! no. Then, why should I obey that power, whose only prerogative is misery?" Has man a right to form these fetters for his fellow-creatures? it cannot, cannot be. —Yet I am enslaved; but reason points the way, and I will follow it. Yes, Fitzroy, the world may censure—sheltered by you, I shall not tremble—retired from its gaze, I shall not meet its frown.—Yes, happiness is yet within my reach, and I will clasp it. Farewell, then, friends—fame—fortune—pomp—and ceremony, adieu!—How cheaply do you restore me the happiness I have lost!"

Thus reasoned, or rather argued, the votary of passion. But let not my readers be hurried by this testimony of her weakness,

weakness, to form too harsh a judgment of her principles. Let them reflect, at how early an age she had been deprived of her broken-hearted mother, from whom she had, indeed, learned lessons of piety and virtue, but she had not even heard of the fortitude which alone could ensure her persevering in them. She was then consigned to the care of an unfeeling father, who censured and controlled even her most innocent actions; or to the servile attendence of dependants, who flattered her most conspicuous follies. By him, she was taught to think meanly of herself—by them, to challenge homage. The attachment of Fitzroy, appeared to have fixed her character:—it was gentle, timid, and amiable. In tearing her from him, had she been given to his equal, a worthy man, though she would not have been happy herself, yet she would have endeavoured to render him so; but he whom

whom her unnatural parent had chosen for her, was, from birth and education, the object of her contempt; from temper, mind, and manners, that of her hate and terror. If all these adverse circumstances will not be admitted, at least, to palliate her determination on the side of vice, the knowledge that she lived to retract her fallacious opinions, and to reflect, with confusion, on their having ever found an advocate in her bosom, will, I trust, plead for her. "To err, is human—to forgive, divine."

END OF VOL. I.

J. D. DEWICK, Printer,
Aldersgate-street